



# Projects



# *Allapattah Ranch*

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Allapattah Ranch SOR project covers 22,560 acres in western Martin County. This project was been placed on the CARL acquisition list in 1996. The overall landform is very flat from east to west, with ground elevations from north to south varying from 27-30' NGVD. The site is dominated by poorly drained flatwoods soils which are saturated for much of the wet season. Historically, this area was a flatwoods matrix, interspersed with depression marshes and wet prairies. With the exception of the four northern sections that drain to Canal-23, the entire site drains slowly to the southeast to the South Fork St. Lucie River. Over the past 30 years the project area has undergone a change in land use from native range grazing to improved pasture, sod farms, and row crops. Most of the understory has been cleared and planted in non-native pasture grasses. The pine flatwoods that remain are open and sparse. Most of the depression marshes remain; however, most of the wet prairies have been drained and the depression marshes have been significantly impacted by drainage. An area of hydric hammock dominates the extreme western boundary. There is good species diversity and many large trees remain. A large canal borders the eastern edge of the hammock, and several smaller canals extend into the hammock, which have significantly lowered the water table and reduced the hydroperiod in this area.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES**

Allapattah Ranch plays a key role in the District's effort to reduce flows from C-23 into the St. Lucie Estuary. Regional attenuation facilities, or Water Preserve Areas, have been proposed which would store stormwater runoff from the agricultural areas of western St. Lucie County, which would reduce damaging peak discharges into the St. Lucie Estuary. If acquired, 8,000 acres of the project adjacent to C-23 would be converted to a reservoir to provide approximately 32,000 acre-feet of storage, which is estimated would reduce wet season stormwater flows into the estuary by 39%. It is estimated that an additional 14% reduction in discharge to the estuary could be achieved by not draining the property. Completely eliminating stormwater discharges is not possible; however, significant reductions could probably be made by blocking existing drainage ditches.

## **POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION**

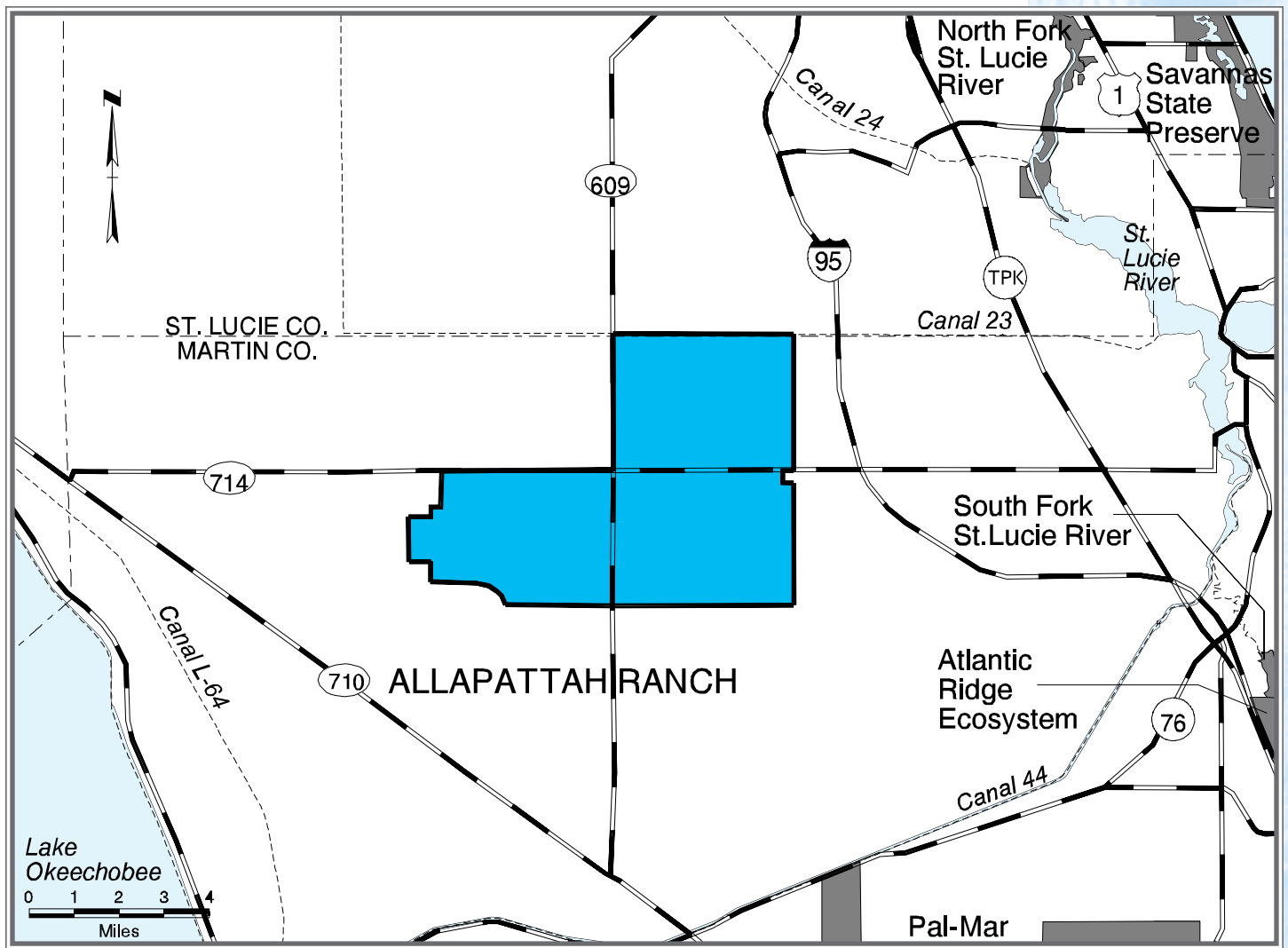
Most of the natural habitats on this tract are highly disturbed. Shallow swales and ditches have reduced the hydroperiod in the wet prairies and depression marshes. Clearing for improved pasture has removed most of the native shrubs and understory. Acquisition would enable most of the wetlands to be restored through the installation of earthen ditch plugs. If water control structures can be installed in the large ditches near the hydric hammock, restoration of that community is possible as well. Upland restoration of the mesic and xeric flatwoods will be much more difficult.

## **POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE MANNER**

The project area has been operated as a cattle ranch for many years. Most of the native shrub understory has been cleared and planted in bahia grass. The hydroperiod of most of the wetlands has been severely shortened. Heavy grazing has kept the site from becoming dominated with wax myrtle. Management of the project will be difficult, even with hydrologic restoration. If cattle are removed it is expected that wax myrtle will rapidly spread. The elimination of bahia grass pastures and restoration of the pine flatwoods communities will be time consuming and expensive. Exotic vegetation control will be a major task, although exotics are not presently a problem. Allapattah Ranch has been proposed to mitigate the loss of recreational hunting opportunities that will occur when Browns Farm Wildlife Management Area is converted into STA 2. As such, it is proposed that Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission be the lead manager for the non-reservoir areas. The District would retain responsibility for all hydrologic restoration.

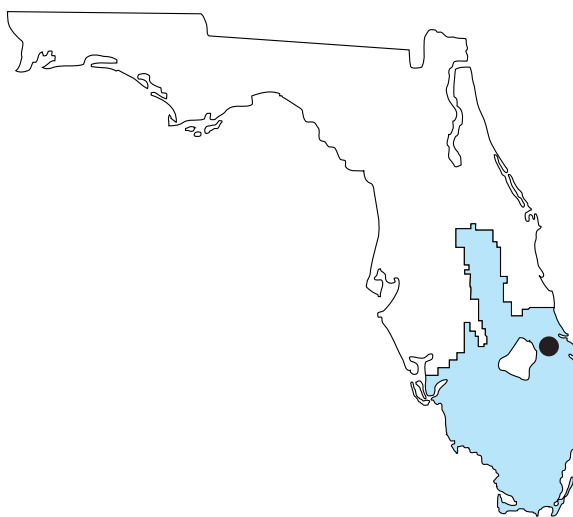
## **RECREATION POTENTIAL**

This tract is large enough to accommodate a variety of recreational uses, including hunting, hiking, camping, and horseback riding.



Counties:  
**Martin**

Total Project Area:  
**22,500 acres**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary



# *Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem*

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem is located in southern Martin County, between US 1 and Interstate 95. It covers 12,300 acres of diverse community types, including scrub, pine flatwoods, and forested sloughs. In 1997, Atlantic Ridge was ranked #2 on the CARL acquisition list. The current land use is mostly cattle grazing on unimproved pasture. Intense agricultural and residential development are occurring around the perimeter of the project.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES**

The project contains extensive upland/wetland systems. This site is very diverse. It has large areas of wet flatwoods and forested sloughs. One of its most important features is coastal scrub. The area is tributary to the South Fork St. Lucie River and North Fork of the Loxahatchee River (Kitching Creek). The extensive wetland systems provide a source of groundwater baseflow for the two rivers. This area is extremely important for aquifer recharge and water supply to the coastal portion of Martin County. It is a groundwater high, with high ground elevations when compared to surrounding lands.

## **POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION**

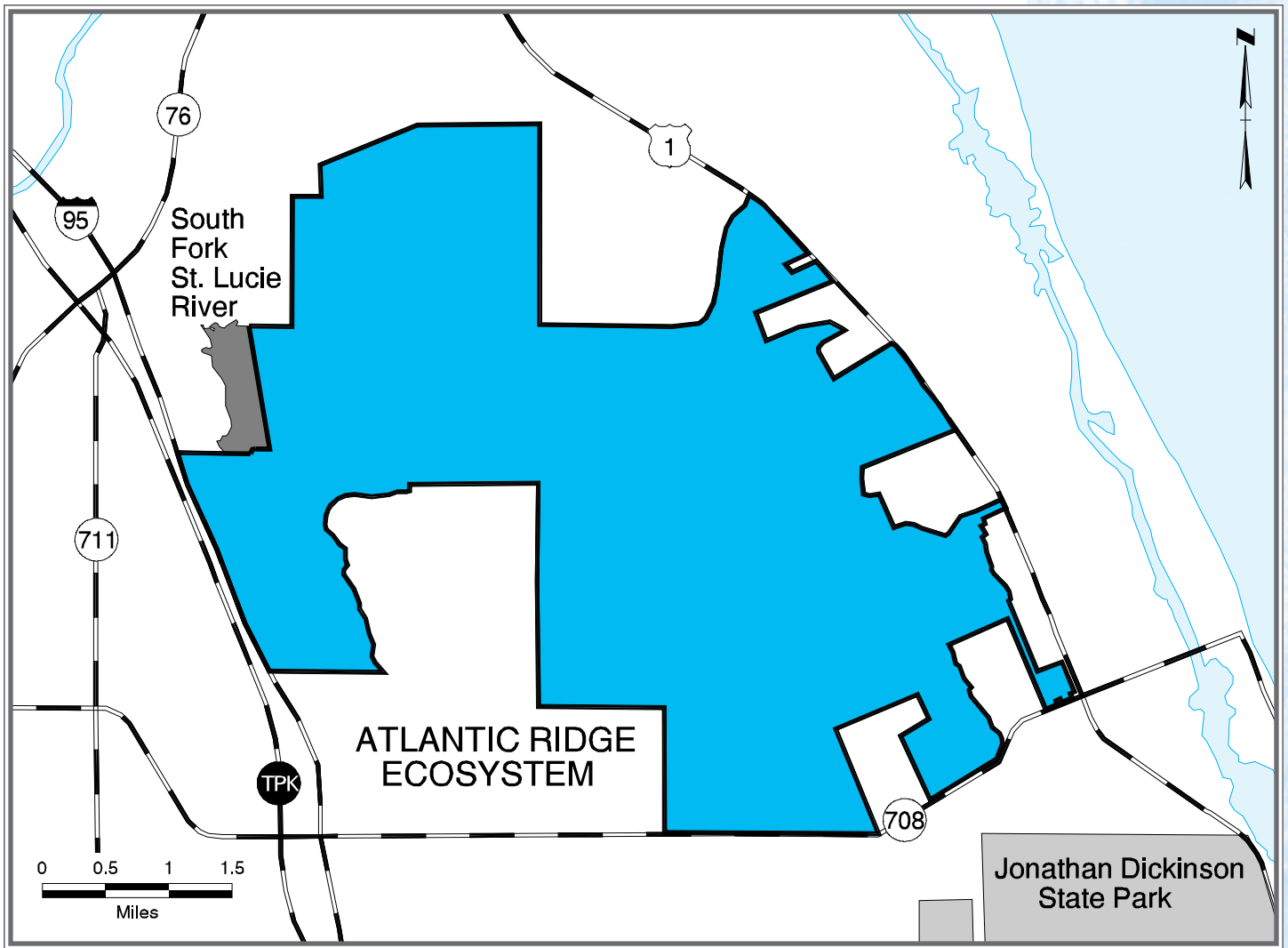
There are numerous abandoned farm fields in the north end which need to be restored. A ditch system connects wetlands in the northwest portion of the project, and drains to the South Fork. However, sheetpile weirs were installed in these ditches as the result of District enforcement action in the mid-1980's. The weirs have prevented the total drainage of the wetlands, but the wetlands could be completely restored with ditch plugs.

## **POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE MANNER**

Under the CARL proposal the project will be managed as a state park or preserve, by the Division of Recreation and Parks. No large exotic plant infestations are present, but exotic control will certainly be a management task, as will prescribed burning.

## **RECREATION POTENTIAL**

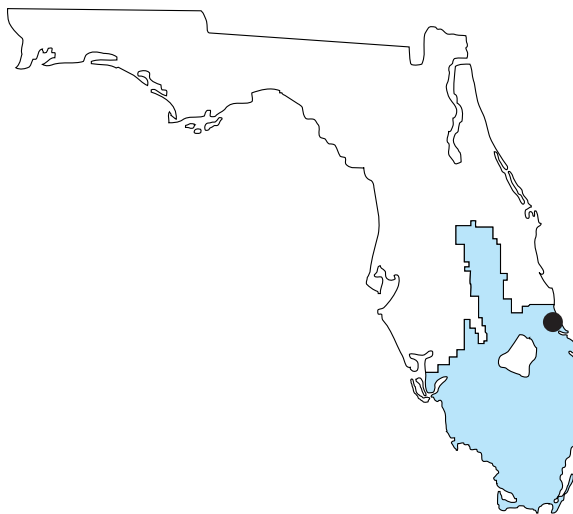
This site is large and very accessible to major population centers in south Florida. Public access points could be established along three sides of the project. The variety of community types would make interesting hiking and the area could be opened to fishing. Hunting might be possible under agreement with GFC.



County:  
**Martin**

Total Project Area:  
**12,300 acres**

Number of Owners:  
**Numerous**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary

# B *ig Pine Key*

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Big Pine Key project is designed to complement the existing Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge. The Nature Conservancy and District Governing Board initiated the land acquisitions, and the District's contribution was limited to \$2 million.

In 1990, the District completed its land-acquisition commitment to the project. The District supports the ongoing acquisition efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CARL, and The Nature Conservancy to protect the remaining undeveloped parcels within the project boundaries. During 1995, The Nature Conservancy acquired 605 acres of mineral rights and transferred ownership to the District.

## LAND STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES

The Nature Conservancy prepared a conceptual management plan to provide future managers with guidelines to protect and restore the unique vegetative communities and wildlife populations on Big Pine Key. The plan includes descriptions and maps of vegetative communities, as well as lists of observed wildlife, endangered plants and animals, and summaries of the island's fresh-water lenses and hydrogeology. The plan also discusses the needs and methodologies for activities that include prescribed burning, exotic plant removal and treatment, general cleanup work, natural resource inventory, and preparation of a land-management plan.

In May 1995, the District approved a 50-year management agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Big

Pine Key property. The agreement provides for all management needs as part of the Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge. After the District provided the first two years of funding, the federal government now provides these services at no cost to the District.

## Potential for Restoring and/or Protecting Natural State and Condition

All management and restoration activities are under way, including control of exotic plants, removal of fill from wetlands, backfilling drainage ditches and general property maintenance. Inventories of the natural resources are continuing, as are planning efforts to conduct additional prescribed burning.

## PUBLIC RECREATION

The Refuge staff works closely with the local office of The Nature Conservancy to carefully plan and analyze all management and outdoor recreation activities on these very sensitive resources.

All major borders of District lands are posted, and the general regulations of the Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge apply. These lands are open to daytime activities, such as hiking, nature study, and horseback riding. Most individual tracts are too small and scattered to sustain much public use.

### NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

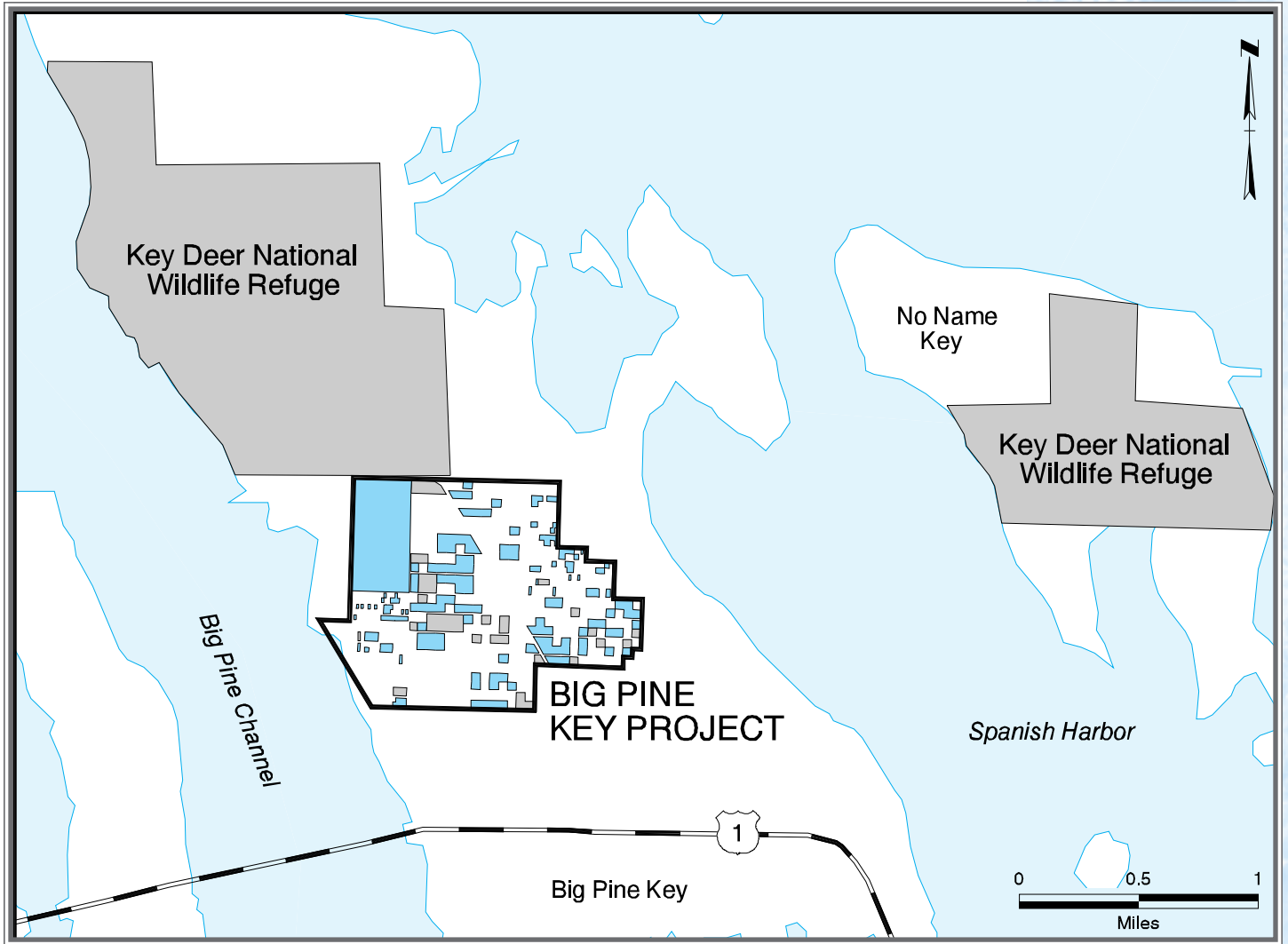
Activity	Acres	Proposed
Exotic Control	80	50
Fire Management	0	10
Mowing/Chopping	0	51
Restoration	5	
	Ongoing	Complete
General Clean-up	•	
Waste Removal		•
Fencing/Posting		•
Security		
USFW		

### PUBLIC USE

	Yes	No
Fishing		•
Hunting		•
Hiking	•	
Horseback Riding		•
Bicycling		•
Camping		•
Airboating		•
Environmental Education	•	

### PLANNING

	Ongoing	Complete
Conceptual Planning	•	
Hydrologic Restoration Plan		•



County:

**Monroe**

Total Acres Acquired:

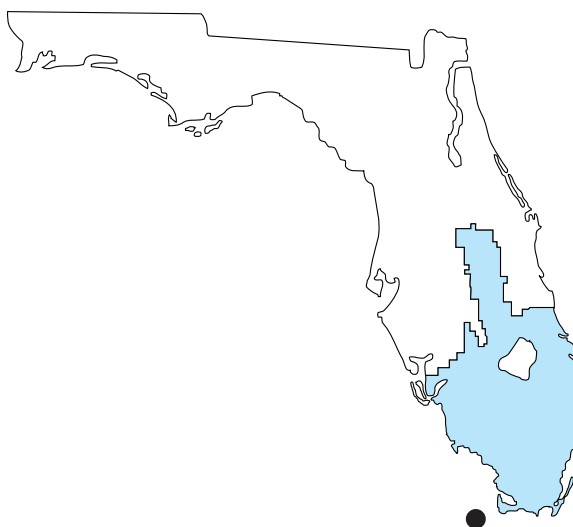
**189**

Land Cost (SOR):

**\$1,999,900**

Acres Remaining:

**0**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary

# Catfish Creek

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Catfish Creek is located in Polk County. The project totals 5,000 acres, and connects with an existing CARL project (same name). Nearly 4,000 acres of the CARL project have been purchased, and much of which remains lies within this project. The District has already acquired 650 acres from the same owner along Lake Hatchineha, as part of the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes SOR project. Current land use is native range grazing, with some areas of improved pasture. This tract contains a diversity of community types, including scrub, seepage slopes, several types of wetlands, and pine flatwoods.

## IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCE

This property has important water resource values due to its location and varied topography. Also, the sand hills in the southwest corner have deep sands which provide direct recharge to the Floridan Aquifer. This site is very diverse, particularly when combined with the lakefront property already acquired, and the Catfish Creek CARL property. It contains mesic hammocks, low flatwoods, dry prairie, scrub, and seepage slopes along the edge of the sand hills.

## POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION

Numerous shallow ditches exist in the improved pastures, which drain to Lake Hatchineha. These ditches can be easily plugged, and the associated wetlands, restored. Upland restoration could be accomplished on the improved pastures. No stands of exotic vegetation were observed. The site contains several threatened communities, including scrub, seepage slopes, and mesic flatwoods. This tract is the headwaters to Catfish Creek which, as a blackwater stream, is also rare. Bald eagles, gopher tortoises, scrub jays, and wood storks have all been documented on the Catfish Creek CARL lands, and are expected to occur on this site, as well.

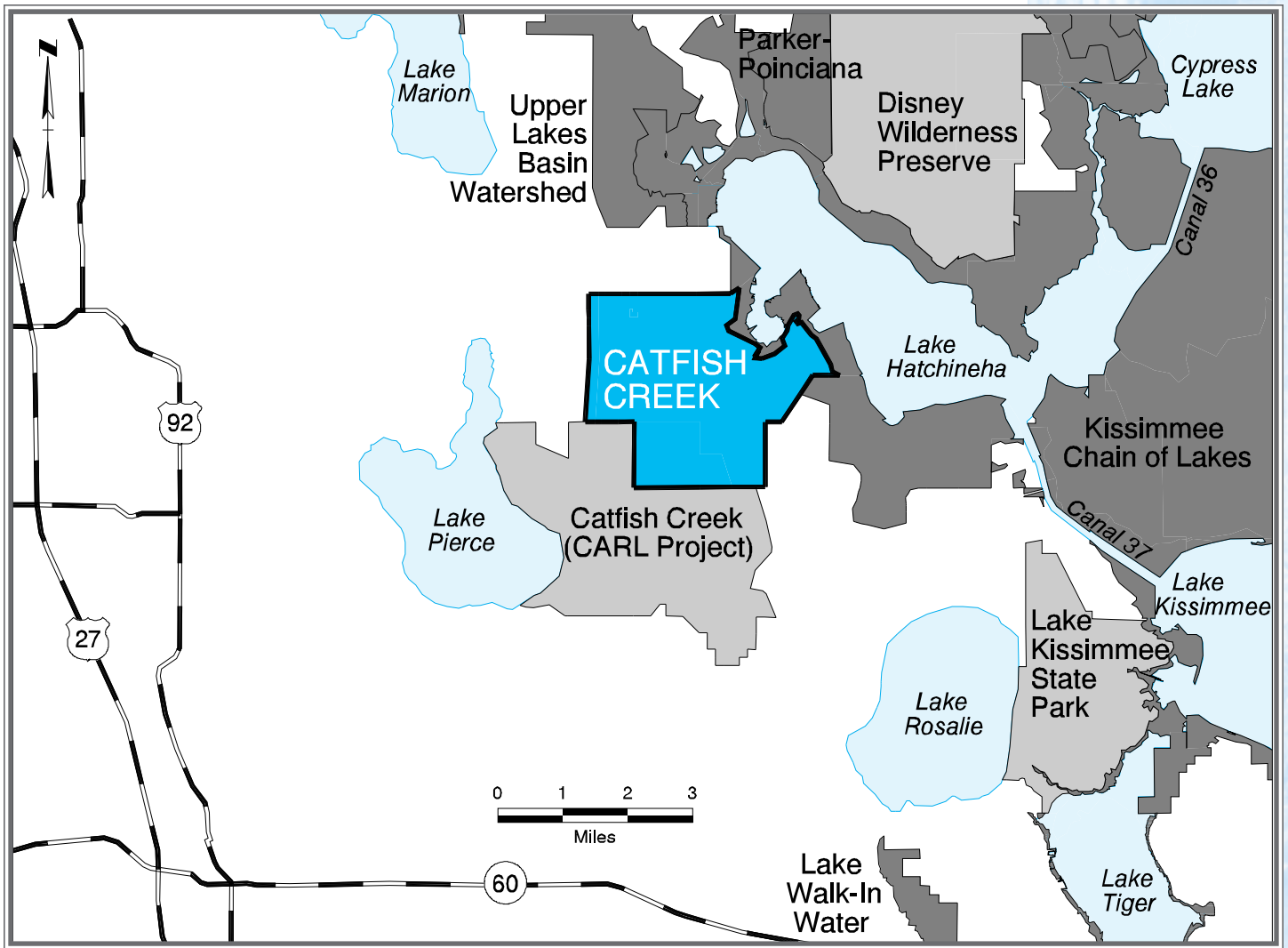
## POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER

Prescribed burning would be required over much of the site. The Catfish Creek CARL project is being managed as a State

Preserve by Florida DEP. That management would likely be extended onto this tract as well.

## RECREATION POTENTIAL

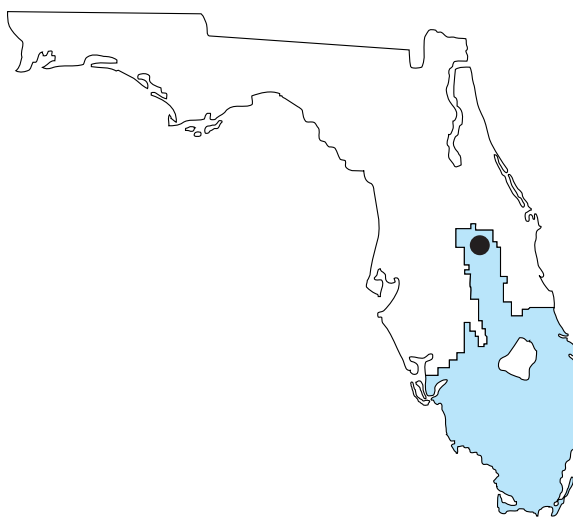
This site has excellent potential for passive recreational use, including hiking, horseback riding, camping, and nature appreciation.



County:  
**Polk**

Total Project Area:  
**5,100 acres**

Number of Owners:  
**One**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary



## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed, commonly called CREW, is a generic name for a vast project covering nearly 55,000 acres in Lee and Collier counties. The CREW lands surround the National Audubon Society's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. However, the sanctuary is not included in the project boundary, nor will it be acquired.

Between July 1996 and June 1997, the District acquired 62 acres.

## PROJECT VISION

The vision for the future of the CREW lands is primarily hydrologic, but it also contains ecological and public-use components. CREW is at the northern tip of the western Big Cypress watershed. Water flows through CREW to private, state, and federally protected natural areas, including the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve, Big Cypress National Preserve, and Everglades National Park.

In addition, surface water from the Flint Pen Strand and Bird Rookery Swamp runs off to Estero Bay and the Wiggins Pass/Cocohatchee River Estuarine System via the Imperial River, Spring Creek and the Cocohatchee canal. The District intends to maintain existing sheet flow and water quality within undisturbed portions of CREW and restore hydrologic conditions in Bird

Rookery Swamp by installing water-control structures in existing canals.

The District plans to enhance natural communities degraded by human impact. Natural reestablishment of slash pine and cypress trees will be encouraged in areas that have been logged. The District has initiated chemical treatment, sometimes in combination with prescribed burning, which will continue until exotic-plant infestations are under control.

### NATURAL RESOURCE

#### MANAGEMENT

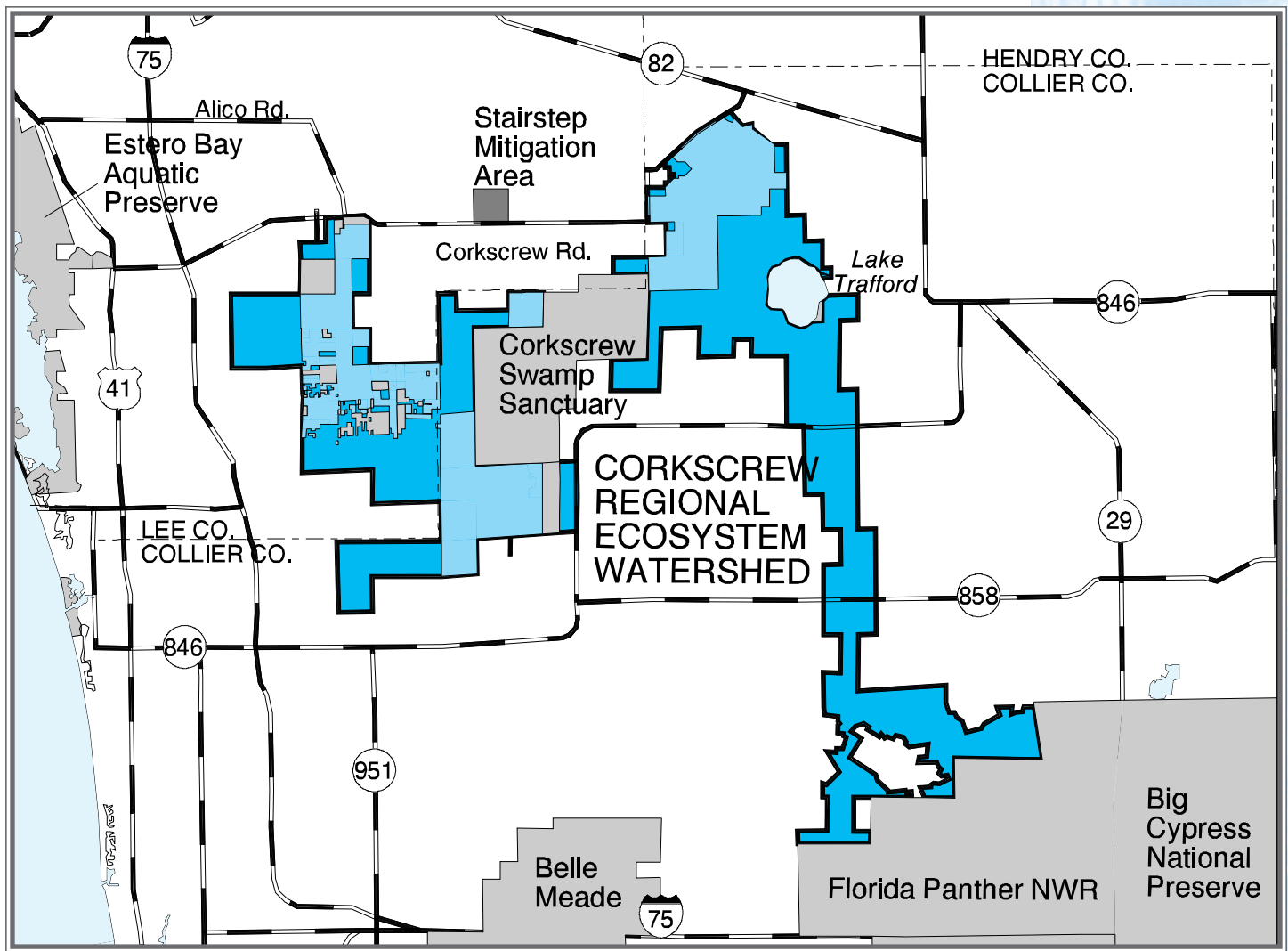
Activity	Acres	Proposed
Exotic Control	10,000	
Fire Management	1,000	1,500
Mowing/Chopping	11 miles	10 miles
Restoration		
	Initiated	Ongoing
General Clean-up		•
Waste Removal		•
Fencing/Posting		•
Security		
GFC Reserve		
GFC		

### PUBLIC USE

	Yes	No
Fishing	NA	
Hunting		•
Hiking	•	
Horseback Riding		•
Bicycling (roads only)		•
Camping	•	
Airboating		•
Environmental Education	•	
Greenway System		
CREW		

### PLANNING

	Ongoing	Complete
Conceptual Planning	•	
Public Input		
CREW Trust		
Cooperative Management Agreement(s)		
County		
FTA		
CREW Trust		



Counties:

**Collier and Lee**

Total Project Area:

**55,968 acres**

Total Acres Acquired:

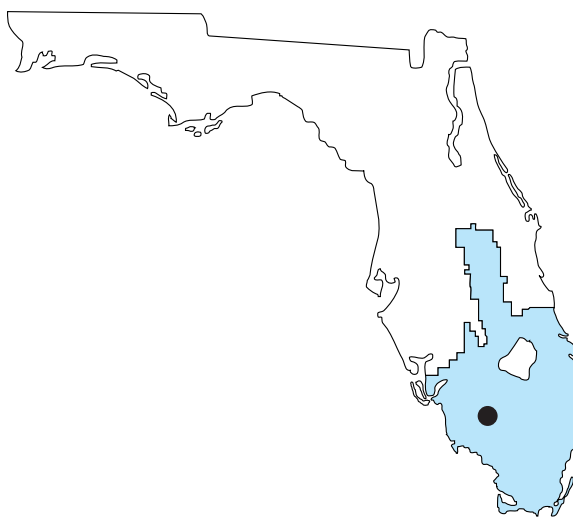
**18,856**

Acres Remaining:

**37,112**

Acres Acquired by Others:

**5**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary



# *Cypress Creek/Trail Ridge*

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

Cypress Creek/Trail Ridge is a 15,500-acre project in southwestern St. Lucie County. It is divided into three major tracts that lie north and south of State Road 70. Two tracts (Cypress Creek portion) are contiguous; the third (Trail Ridge) is not.

The project gets its name from a large forested wetland system that once extended along the entire eastern edge of the Orlando Ridge south of Indian River County, through Allapattah Flats, and drained into the South Fork St. Lucie River. The Cypress Creek portion is also a CARL project.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCE**

The lands in this proposal include a major portion of the largest remaining wetland system in western St. Lucie County. The area north of SR 70 is a mixture of hydric hammock, basin swamps, and improved pasture. Much of the cypress and pine north of SR 70 has been logged.

Flows from Cypress Creek, which historically passed under SR 70 have been routed west through a ditch along the north side of the highway. The ditch passes under SR 70 and into a ditch along the west side of Bluefield Road. The canal turns east and forms the southern property boundary of the Cypress Creek portion and empties into C-23 Canal. Most of the historic slough remains intact south of SR 70. Very little logging has occurred. Some minor ditching has taken place, but the greatest impact to hydroperiod appears to be the rerouting of Cypress Creek.

The Trail Ridge portion is separated from Cypress Creek and lies along the west side of Bluefield Road. It still contains remnant bay and cypress heads, and a narrow band of hydric hammock, known as Van Swearingen Creek. Two large areas of sand pine scrub are the most significant natural features.

## **POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION**

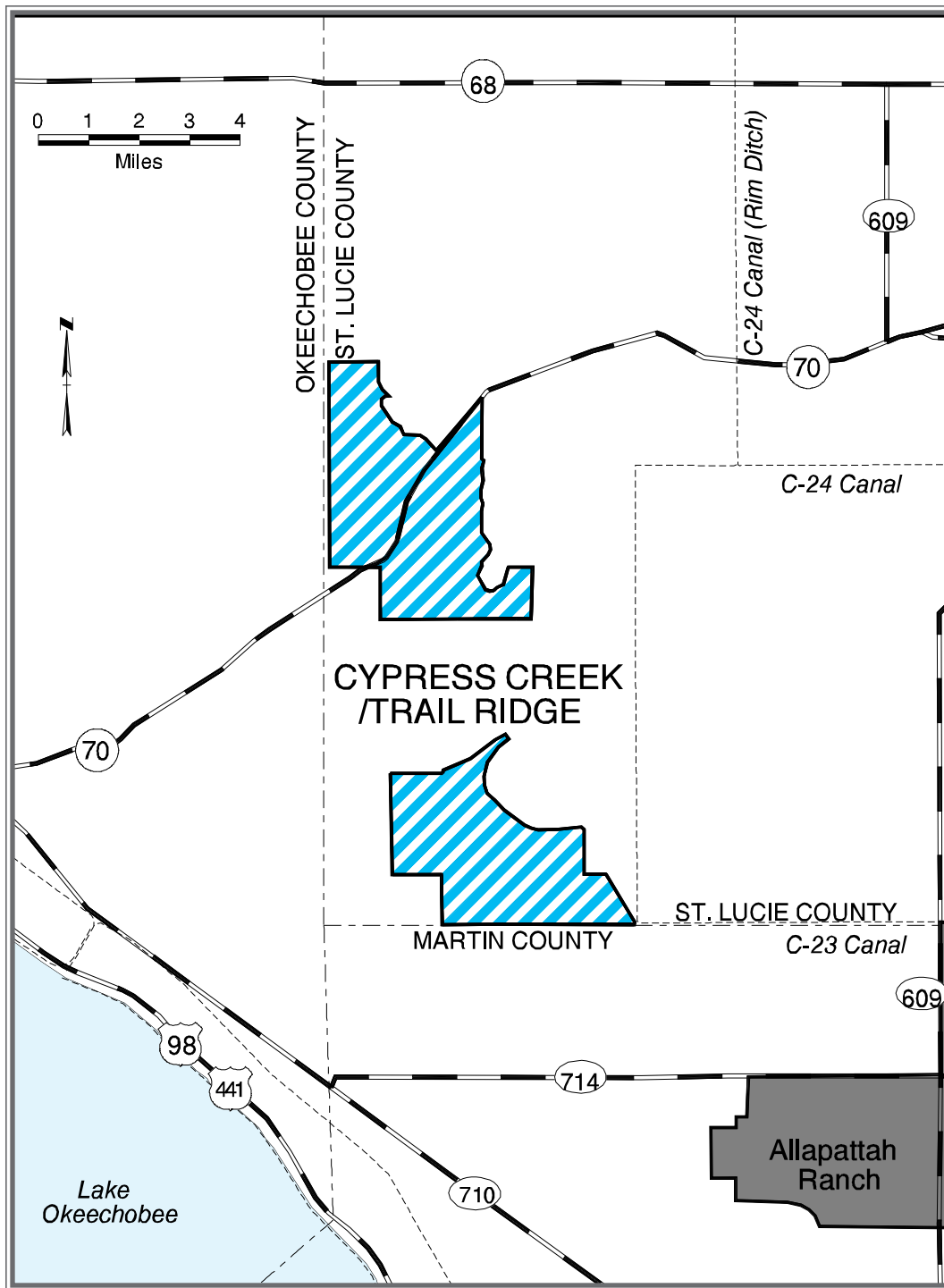
The SOR application proposed that only the portion north of SR 70 be acquired fee title. The remaining lands south of SR 70 would be purchased as conservation easements. The southern Cypress Creek portion needs some hydrologic restoration. However, that depends on restoring flows under SR 70 and reaching an acceptable agreement with the landowner regarding additional water on his property.

## **POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER**

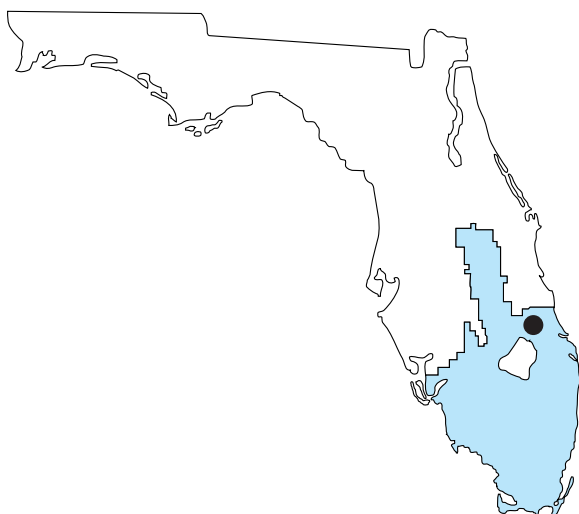
Prescribed burning would be required over much of the site. The Catfish Creek CARL project is being managed as a State Preserve by Florida DEP. That management would likely be extended onto this tract as well.







## **RECREATION POTENTIAL**

Since only the lands north of SR 70 will be acquired in fee, that is the only area where public use will be allowed. There is good mixture of community types where hiking trails and wilderness campsites could be developed. It is possible that suitable areas exist for equestrian trails, as well.



Counties:  
**St. Lucie**  
 Total Project Area:  
**13,788 acres**



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Areas
-  Other Conservation Areas
-  Other SOR Projects
-  1997 Project Additions
-  SOR Project Boundary



# *DuPuis Reserve*

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The DuPuis Reserve encompasses 21,875 acres in northwestern Palm Beach and southwestern Martin Counties. The property is interspersed with numerous ponds, wet prairies, cypress domes, and remnant Everglades marsh.

## PROJECT VISION

The DuPuis Reserve will be a mixture of community types, characteristic of the diverse ecosystem that existed before the impacts which increased drainage and reduced sheetflow. Plant communities will include wet flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, wet prairies, depression marshes, cypress dominated basin swamps and restored Everglades. Water and fire will be the major natural elements that drive ecological succession. Hydrologic management, prescribed burning and exotic species control will be the primary tools used to restore and manage these communities. Wetland restoration efforts will restore the functional values of water storage and water quality provided by the DuPuis Reserve.

### NATURAL RESOURCE

#### MANAGEMENT

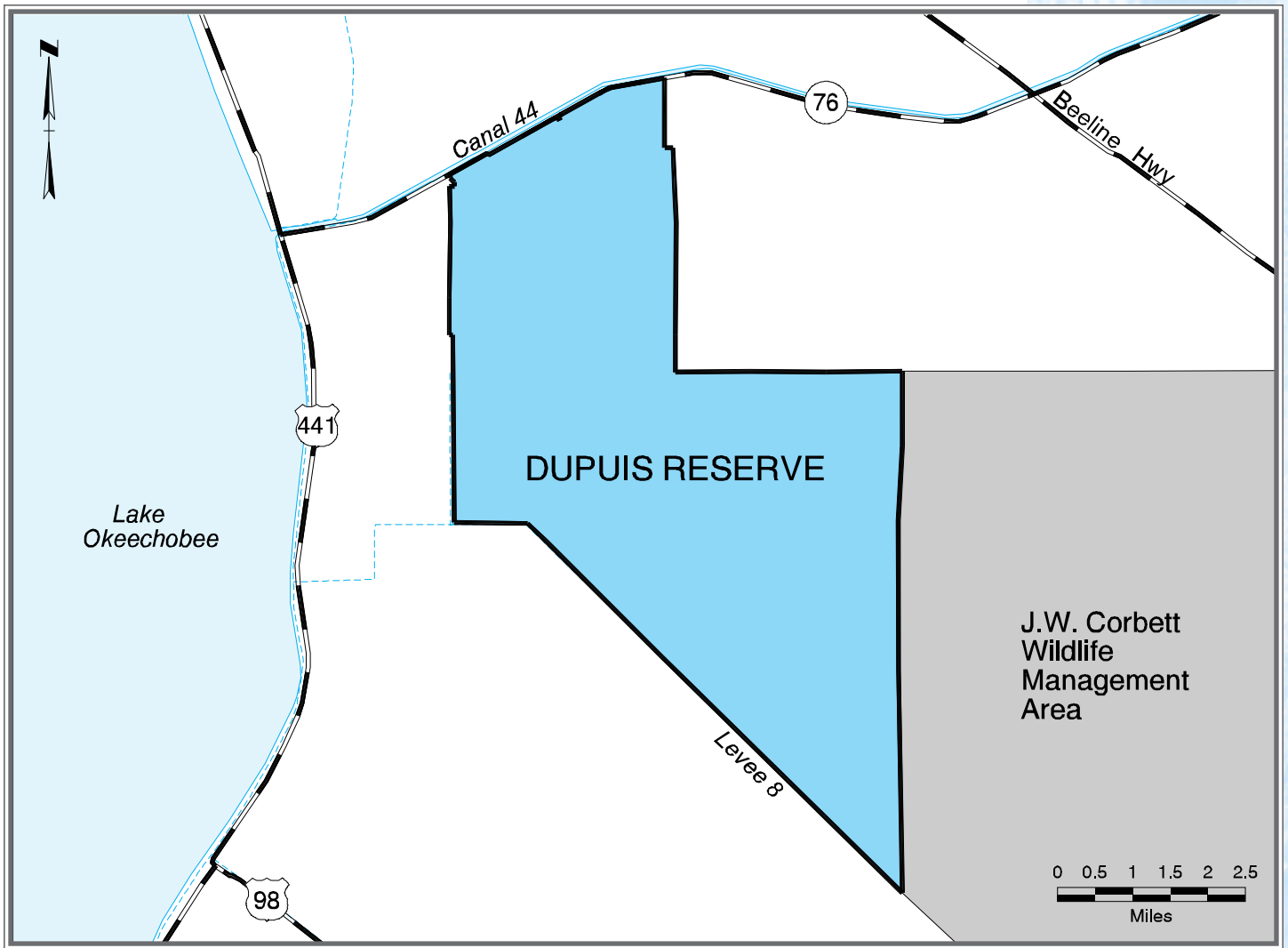
Activity	Acres	Proposed
Exotic Control	13,000	10,000
Fire Management	5,705	9,000
Mowing/Chopping	600	1,000
Restoration	2,000	2,500
	Ongoing	Complete
General Clean-up	•	
Waste Removal	•	
Fencing/Posting	•	
Security		
GFC		

### PUBLIC USE

	Yes	No
Fishing	•	
Hunting	•	
Hiking	•	
Horseback Riding	•	
Bicycling	•	
Camping	•	
Airboating		•
Environmental Education	•	
Greenway System		
Lake Okeechobee to Atlantic Ocean		

### PLANNING

	Ongoing	Complete
Conceptual Planning	•	
Hydrologic Restoration Plan	•	



Counties:

**Martin and Palm Beach**

Total Project Area:

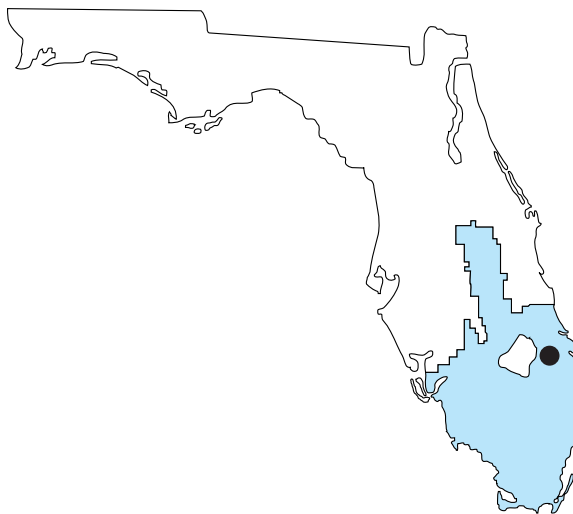
**21,875 acres**

Total Acres Acquired:

**21,875**

Land Cost:

**\$23 Million**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary



# *East Coast Buffer*

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The East Coast Buffer consists of approximately 66,400 acres of marshes, reservoirs, and groundwater recharge areas in Palm Beach, Broward and Dade counties. The conceptual plan is to locate these areas on undeveloped lands abutting the East Coast Protective Levee, which separates the water conservation areas from developed lands to the east. A detailed description of these lands is available from District staff in either the land stewardship or lower east coast planning divisions.

The East Coast Buffer incorporates lands within three previously designated Save Our Rivers projects — the Dade-Broward Levee, Everglades Buffer Strip North, and Strazzulla. The acreage of these projects is included within the total area shown for the East Coast Buffer Project.

In June 1997, the District's Governing Board approved the expansion of the project by 5,657 acres. Between July 1, 1996, and September 30, 1997, the District acquired 4,271.6 acres within the project area.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES**

Serving as a barrier, the East Coast Buffer will reduce the impacts of development to the Everglades, reduce levee seepage from the Everglades, increase groundwater recharge, enhance drinking-water supplies, improve the Everglade's water supply, and enhance the thousands of acres of remaining wetlands that once comprised the Everglades.

The project involves using excess stormwater to reduce the seepage loss from the East Coast Protective Levee. Management activities proposed for the marshes include hydroperiod restoration and removal of exotic vegetation to enhance, preserve, and maintain the wetlands.

## **POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION**

Most of the land within the boundary delineated for the East Coast Buffer is undeveloped. Current land uses include very low-intensity development, pasture, and limestone mining. A significant portion also contains viable wetland habitat.

An important consideration in the development of the buffer is preserving and enhancing these wetlands. The District carefully studied improving the hydrologic patterns associated with them. Facilities such as pump stations, canals, and levees and associated operational criteria would be developed to enhance these valuable wetlands.

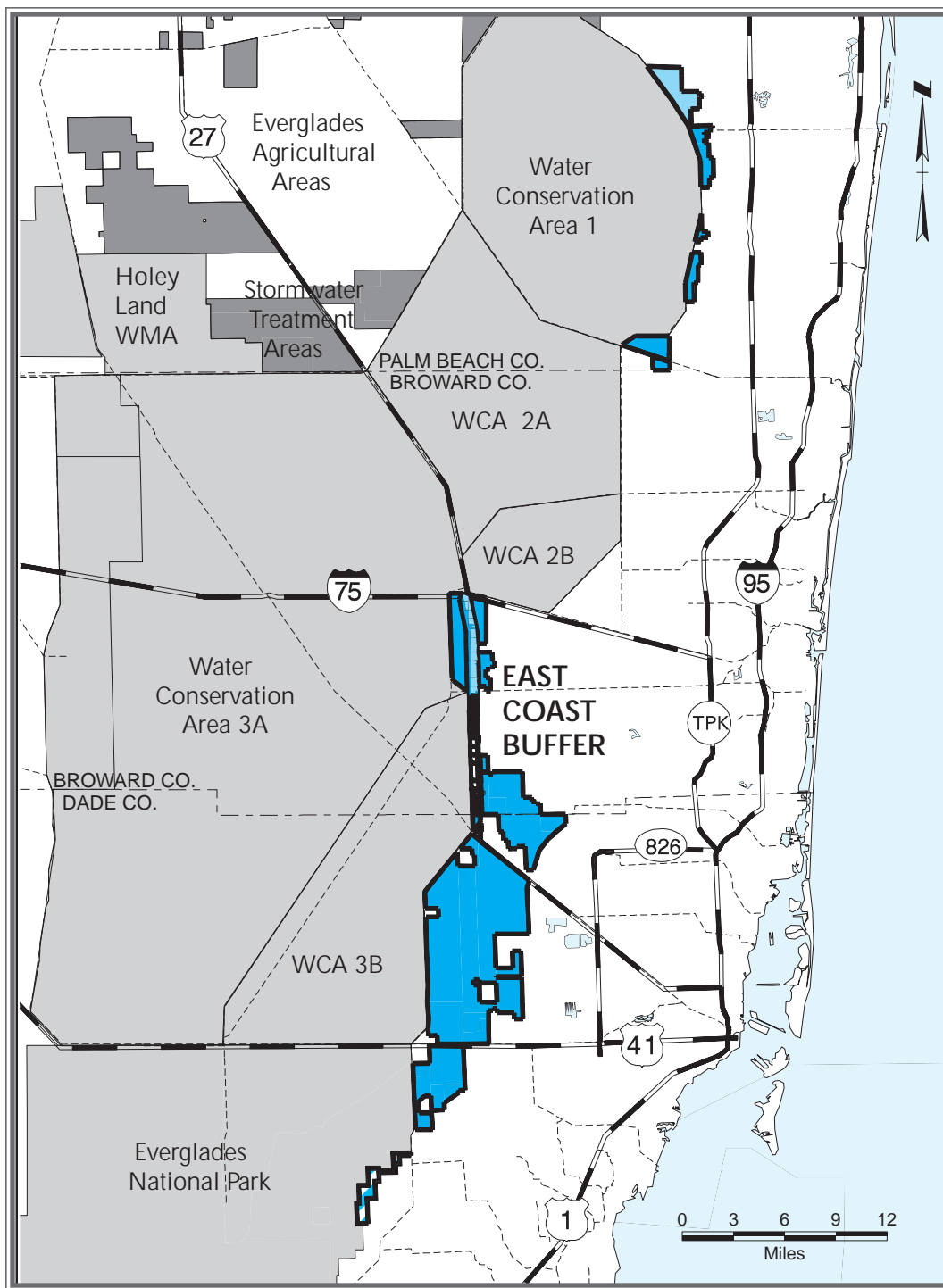
## **POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER**

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the East Coast Buffer is its role in restoring the Everglades. In 1992, Congress authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct the Central and Southern Florida Project Comprehensive Review Study. The reconnaissance report for this restudy was completed in November 1994. The Corps incorporated the East Coast Buffer in its analysis, referring to the area as the "Water Preserve Areas."

The reconnaissance report identified the need to restore more natural hydrologic conditions to the Everglades. The ability of the Water Preserve Areas to capture and store water currently released to the ocean is an essential component in any comprehensive plan to restore the Everglades. The Corps and the District are jointly conducting the second phase — the feasibility report — of the restudy, which specifically includes the East Coast Buffer or Water Preserve Areas.

## **RECREATION POTENTIAL**

Recreational activities could include fishing, canoe trails, environmental education, and interpretive facilities.



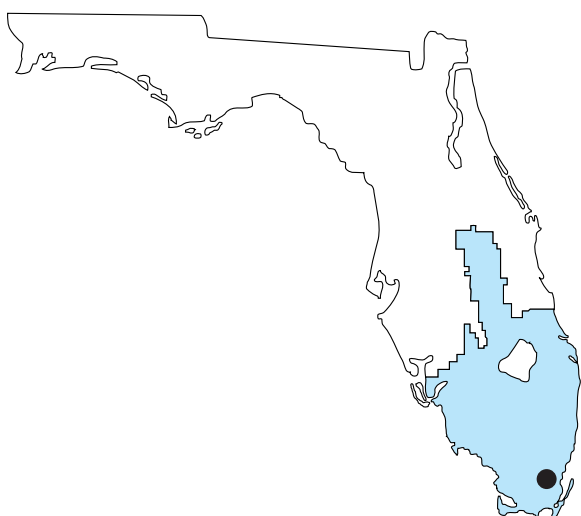
Counties:  
**Palm Beach, Broward and Dade**

Total Project Area:  
**70,883**

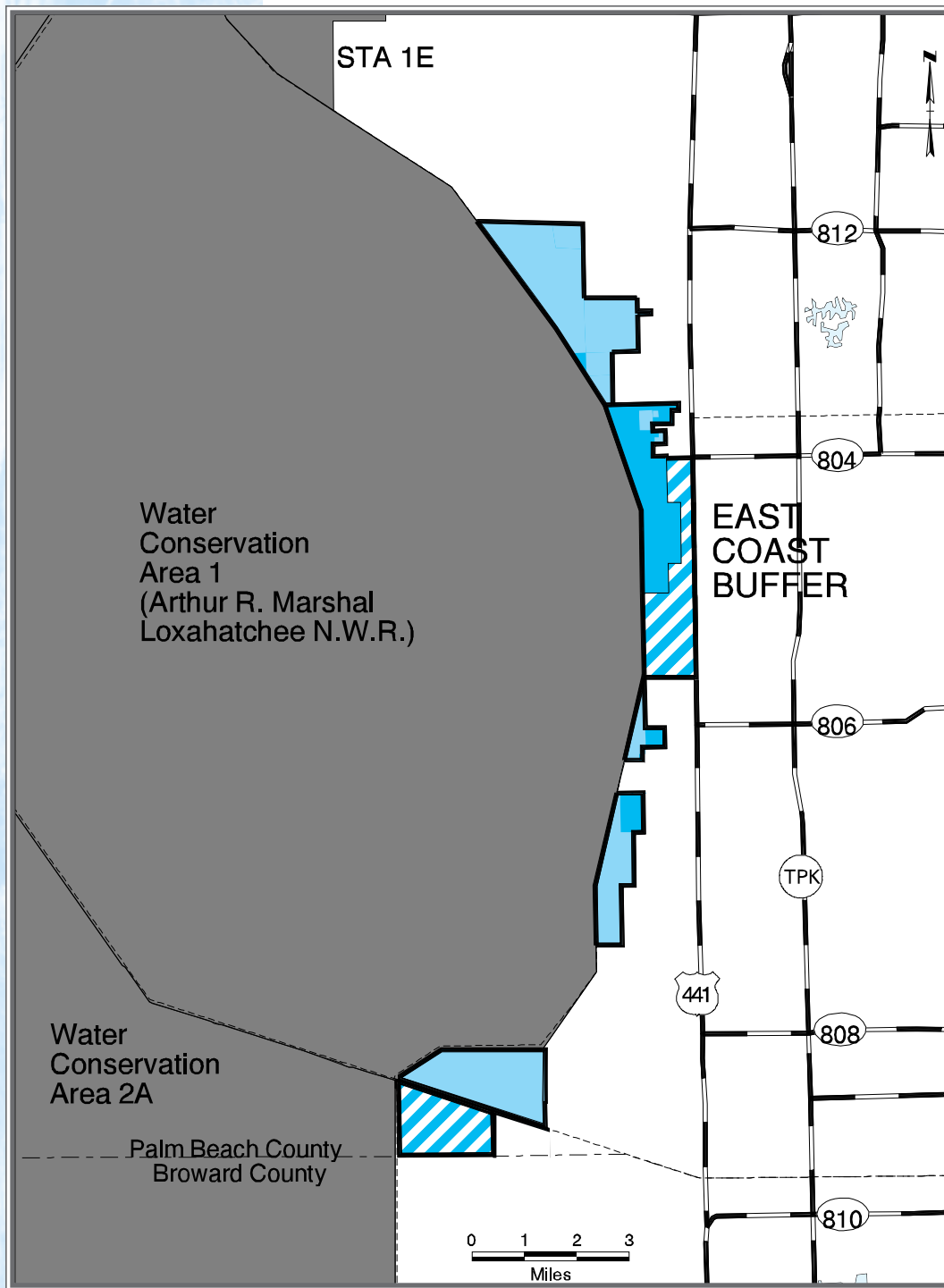
Total Acres Acquired:  
**15,164**

Acres Remaining:  
**\*55,537**

\*Project area includes previously acquired lands.



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary



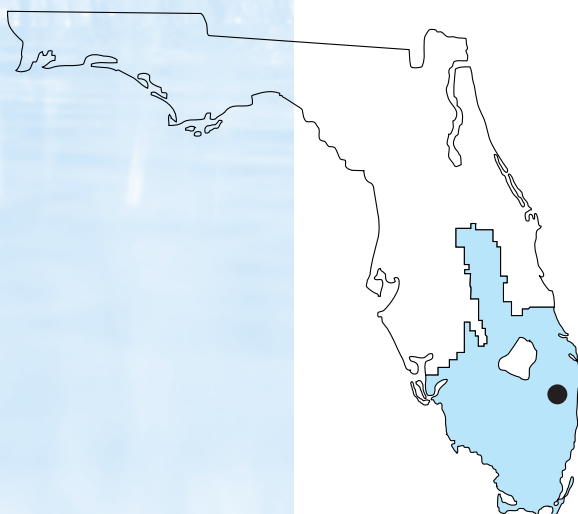
Counties:  
**Palm Beach**







Total Project Area:  
**70,883**

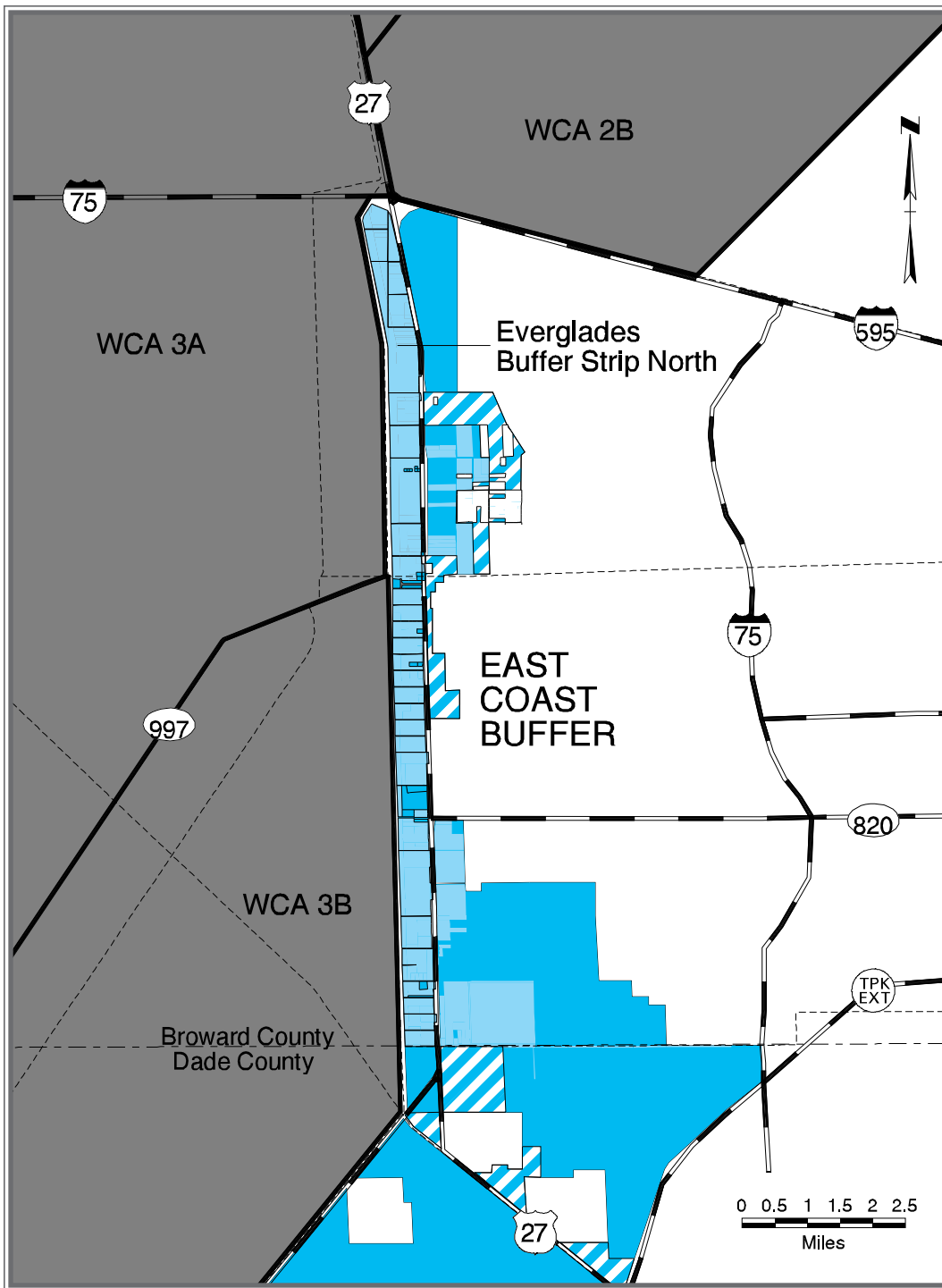
Total Acres Acquired:  
**15,164**

Acres Remaining:  
**\*55,537**

\*Project area includes  
previously acquired lands.



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Areas
-  Other Conservation Areas
-  Other SOR Projects
-  1997 Project Additions
-  SOR Project Boundary



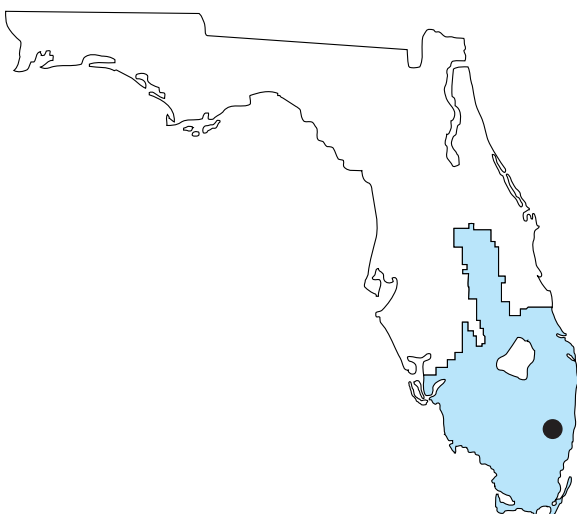
Counties:  
**Broward**







Total Project Area:  
**69,412**

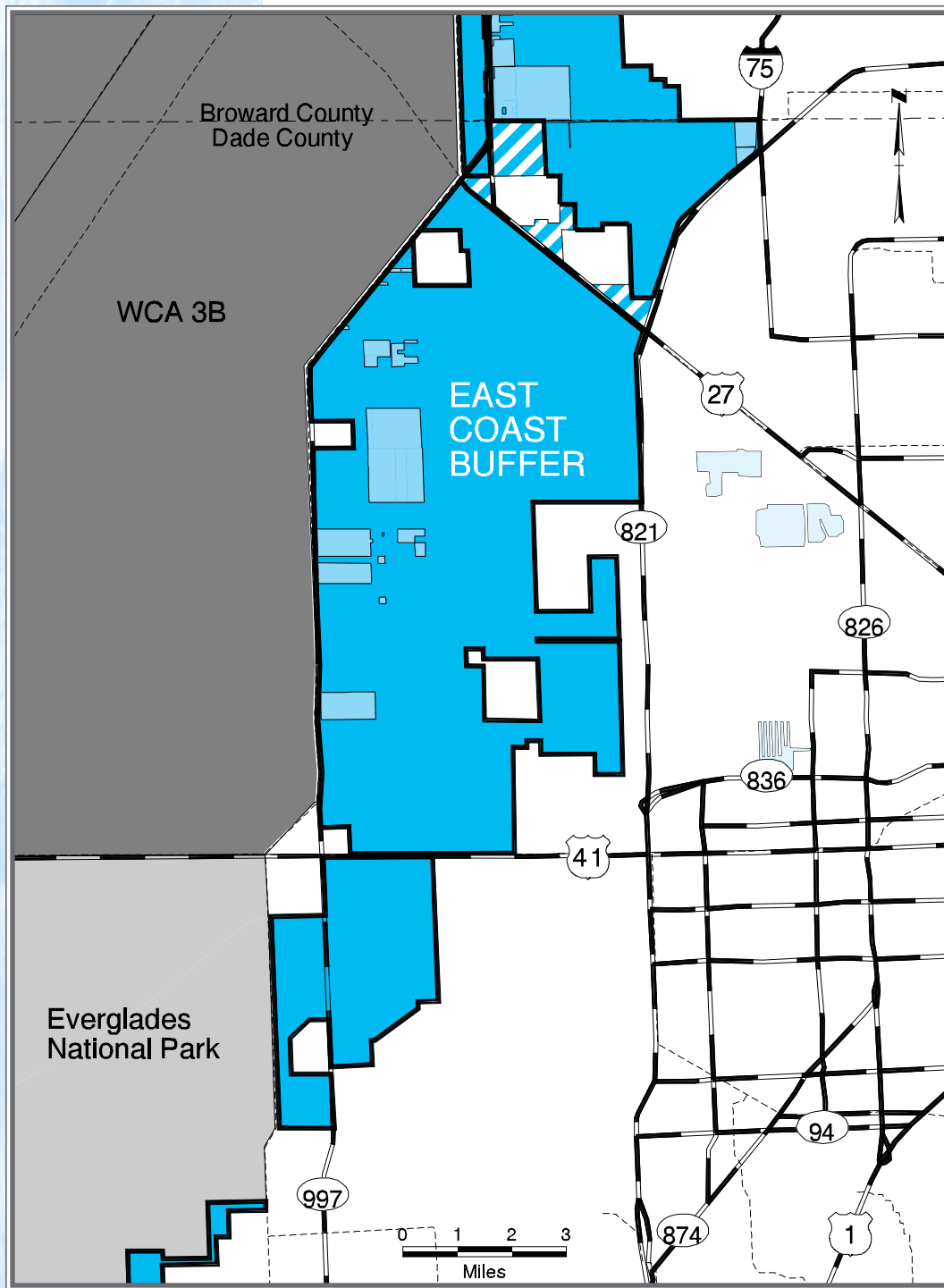
Total Acres Acquired:  
**5,601.6**

Acres Remaining:  
**\*55,537**

\*Project area includes  
previously acquired lands.



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Areas
-  Other Conservation Areas
-  Other SOR Projects
-  1997 Project Additions
-  SOR Project Boundary



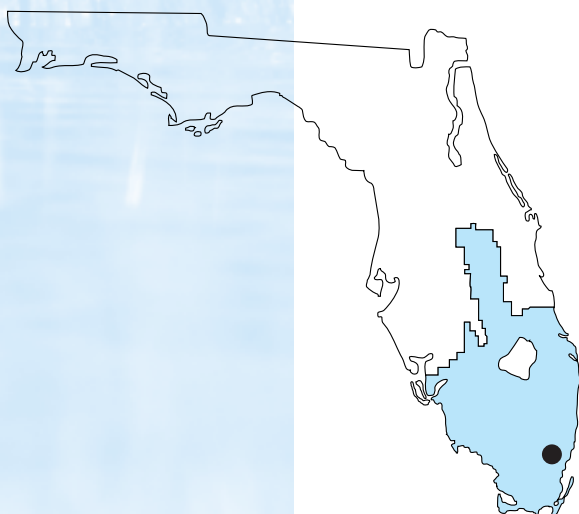
Counties:  
**Dade**

Total Project Area:  
**69,412**

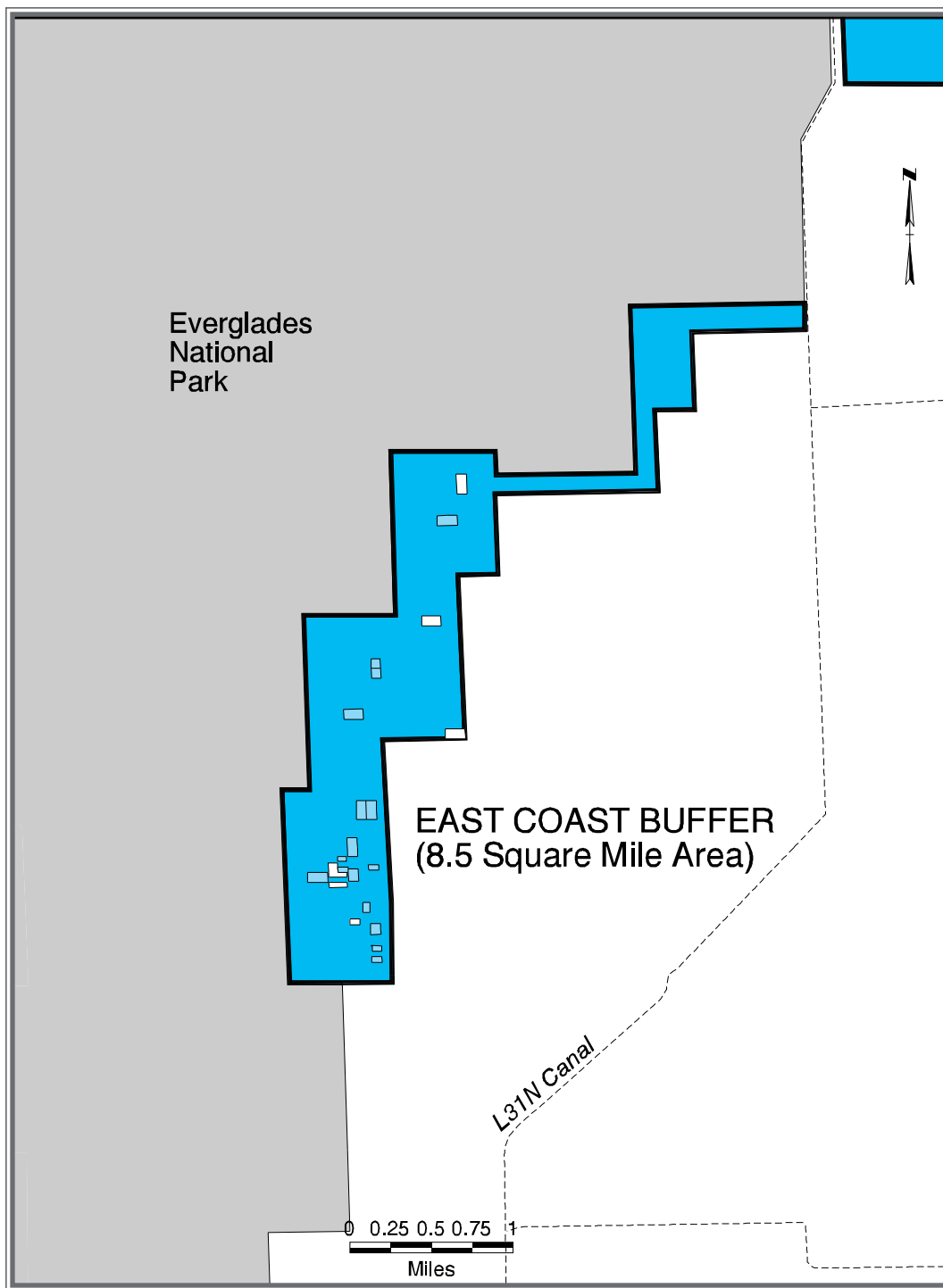
Total Acres Acquired:  
**5,601.6**

Acres Remaining:  
**\*55,537**

\*Project area includes  
previously acquired lands.



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary



Counties:

**Dade**

Total Project Area:

**69,412**

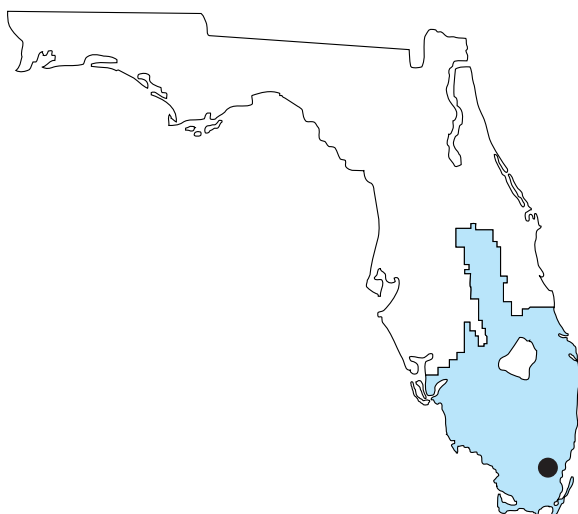
Total Acres Acquired:







**5,601.6**

Acres Remaining:

**\*55,537**

\*Project area includes previously acquired lands.



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Areas
-  Other Conservation Areas
-  Other SOR Projects
-  1997 Project Additions
-  SOR Project Boundary



# *Everglades Agricultural Area*

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION:**

The EAA Lands consist of real estate holdings of the Talisman Sugar Corporation Inc. These lands lie in the southern portion of the “Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) between the Miami Canal and North New River Canal in the S-7 and S-8 drainage basins. This area is south of Lake Okeechobee and west of the Water Conservation Areas. Between July 1, 1996-September 30, 1997, the District acquired 1,233 acres in the project.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES**

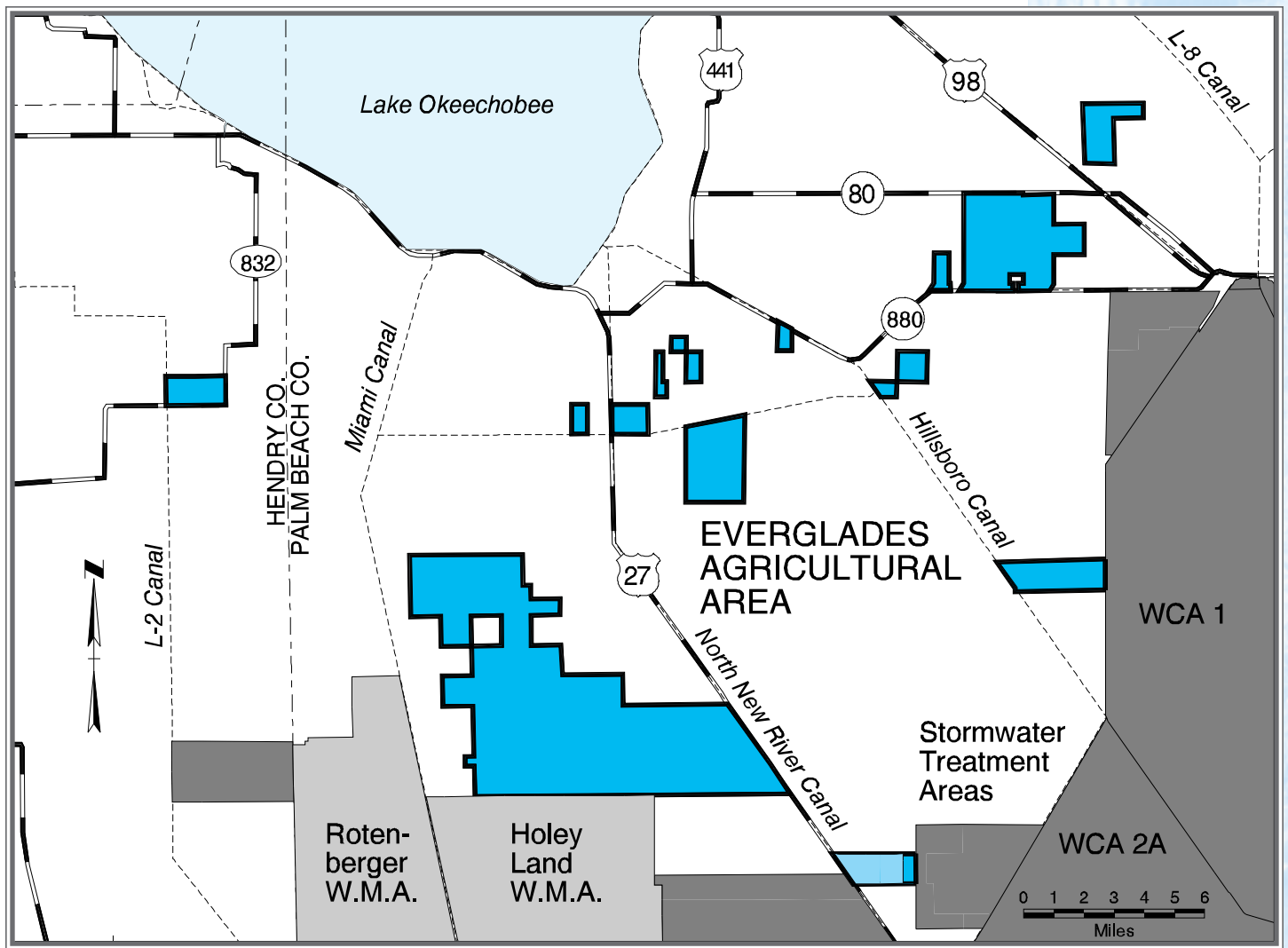
The Everglades Agricultural Areas would serve as a barrier to reduce the impacts of development to the Everglades, reduce levee seepage from the Everglades, increase groundwater recharge, enhance drinking water supplies, improve the Everglade’s water supply, and enhance thousands of acres of wetlands that once comprised the Everglades. The project involves using excess stormwater to reduce the seepage loss from the East Coast Protective Levee. Management activities proposed for the marshes propose hydroperiod restoration and the removal of exotic vegetation for the enhancement, preservation and maintenance of the wetlands.

## **POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION**

Another possibility for the lands would be restoration of the “historic” Everglade’s ecosystem that once existed in that area. This would require restoration of pre-drainage hydrology in reestablishing the natural temporal and spatial distribution of flows and water depths that contributed to the sustainability of the pre-development ecosystem. The Natural System Model simulations of the pre-development hydrology indicate that the lands near the Holey Land experienced inundation approximately 80-90 percent of the time with an average depth of just over one-half foot.

## **RECREATION POTENTIAL**

Recreational activities could include fishing, canoe trails, environmental education and possibly some interpretive sites.



Counties:

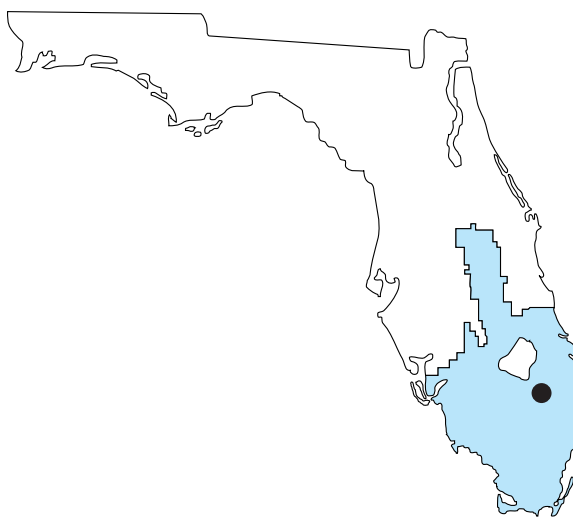
**Palm Beach**

Total Project Area:

**48,570 acres**

Total Areas Acquired:

**1,233 acres**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary

# Fisheating Creek

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Fisheating creek is an extensive riverine swamp system flowing through Glades County. The creek and its headwaters form an extensive watershed covering hundreds of square miles.

In 1991, the District Governing Board approved a boundary revision, which added nearly 15,000 acres to the project. The additional area includes a large freshwater marsh and low pine flatwoods, which buffer the riverine swamp corridor.

## IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES

Fisheating Creek is the only free-flowing tributary to Lake Okeechobee. The meandering runs and associated flood plain attenuate peak discharges during heavy storm events and are important for water quality improvement prior to discharges entering Lake Okeechobee. Groundwater resources have not been quantified for this area; however, the Surficial Aquifer has suitable capacity to supply low-volume users.

## POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION

Much of the uplands and wetlands defined by the limits of this project remain in a relatively undisturbed state. Habitat types include cypress sloughs/mixed hardwood swamp forest, emergent marshes, willow thickets and openwater ponds and runs. Land-use in and around the flood plain is mostly native range. Use by wading birds is very heavy, including endangered wood storks, white ibis and great egrets. When stages in Lake Okeechobee are high, Fisheating Creek serves as an important feeding area for birds, which normally use the lake marshes.

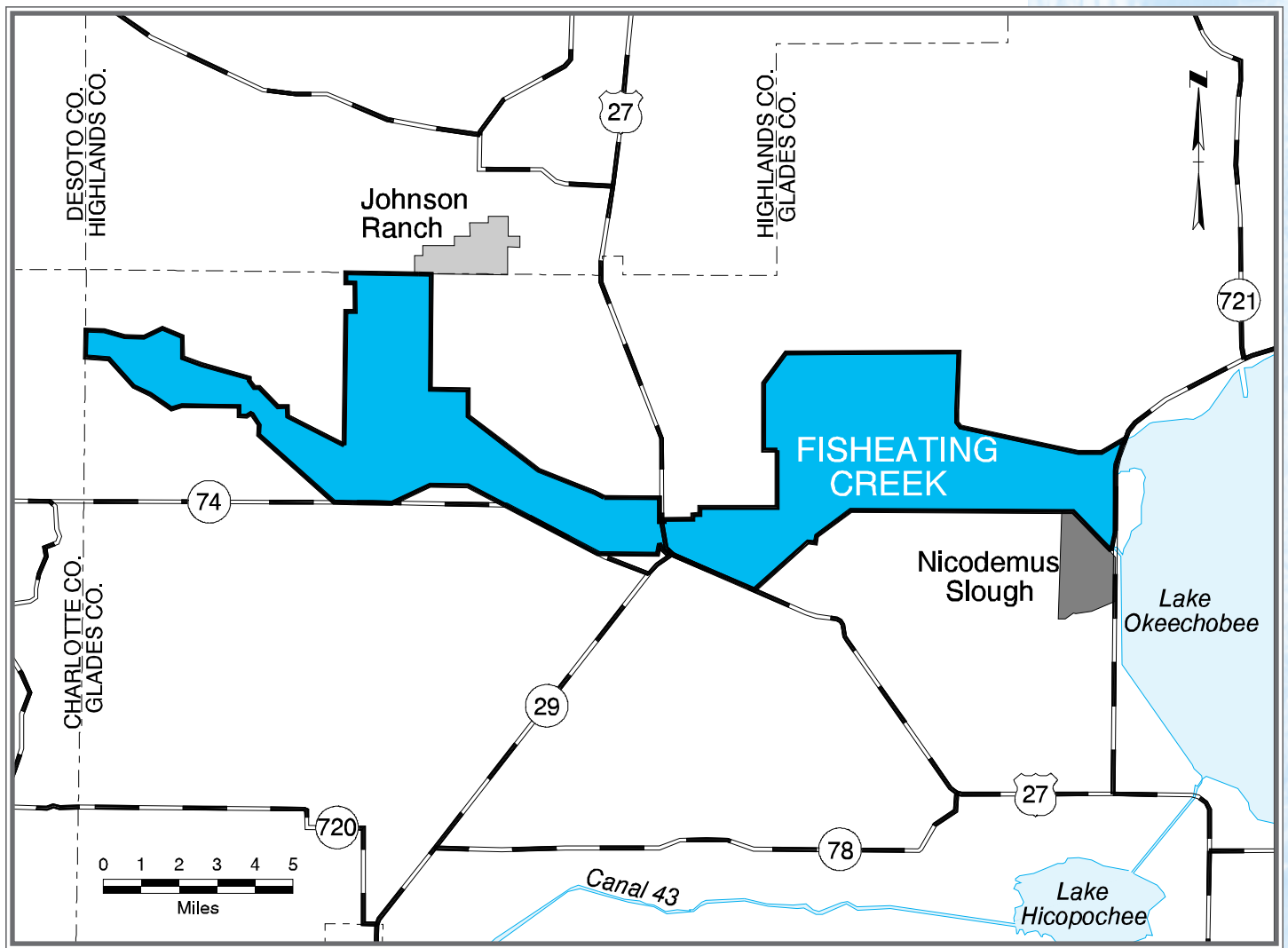
## POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER

Restoration requirements, if any, would be minimal, as most of the property is in its natural state. A prescribed burning program would be necessary to maintain appropriate species diversity in the plant communities and to reduce the potential for harmful wildfires. Additionally, it would be necessary to target the removal of noxious aquatic weeds from the lakes and creek channel to facilitate canoeing and fishing. Continued livestock grazing would be a likely condition to acquisition of the property and would necessi-

tate the development of an approved program by the USDA Soil Conservation Service in consultation with the District and the livestock operator. Special consideration would be given to maintenance of critical habitat for endangered and/or threatened species, and a trapping program would be required to control the population of feral hogs. Implementation of a comprehensive security program would be needed to prevent unauthorized entry and to discourage poaching and other illegal activities.

## RECREATION POTENTIAL

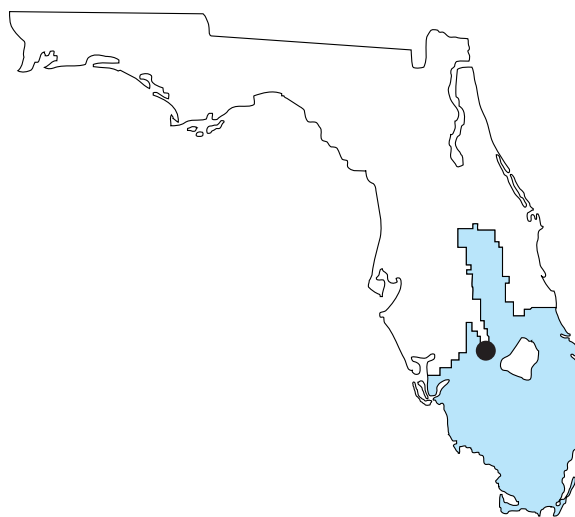
Acquisition and protection of Fisheating Creek, its floodplain and suitable upland corridor, could provide the public with opportunities for a variety of outdoor recreational activities. The reach of the creek upstream of Palmdale has been a popular canoe run for many years and is famous for its scenic attributes. Opportunities to view and photograph the flora and fauna that abound along the creek could be enhanced by the establishment of suitable hiking trails throughout the property and the implementation of guided tours. A connector trail to the proposed Florida National Scenic Trail around Lake Okeechobee would be a possibility. Access to the Fort Center archaeological site and the provision of appropriate interpretive facilities could provide visitors an insight to the area's history and early inhabitants. Environmental education programs could also be developed to enhance visitor awareness of the area's ecology. A full service campground is located west of US Highway 27 at Palmdale, and would avoid the necessity of providing these facilities elsewhere on the property.









County:  
**Glades**

Total Project Area:  
**43,872 acres**

Number of Owners:  
**One**



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Areas
-  Other Conservation Areas
-  Other SOR Projects
-  1997 Project Additions
-  SOR Project Boundary

# Frog Pond

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Frog Pond and L-31N Transition Lands cover approximately 10,450 acres and are located in south Dade County. The project includes 5,200 acres of agricultural lands known as the Frog Pond, which lie immediately north of the C-111 SOR project. It also contains 5,250 acres of “transitional lands,” located east of C-111 and L-31N, north of the Frog Pond, and south of the 8.5 Square Mile Area.

## ACQUISITION ACTIVITY

In 1994, the District made its first purchases in the L-31N transition area. During 1997, the District acquired 391 acres.

## IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES

The purpose of the project is to increase the hydropattern of the marshes in eastern Everglades National Park and to improve freshwater flow to Taylor Slough and Florida Bay. Under the South Florida Water Management District's C-111/Taylor Slough interim plan, the groundwater table, as controlled through stages in C-111 and L-31 canals, will be maintained at higher levels to promote increased discharge into Taylor Slough.

In addition, the District's preferred plan under the U.S Army Corps of Engineers' C-111 General Re-evaluation Report calls for a floodway to be located in the Frog Pond agricultural area. This area will:

1. Simulate the natural hydrograph for delivery of water into Taylor Slough;
2. Use natural vegetation and microbial soil processes to cleanse runoff before discharge into Everglades National Park, and
3. Restore the connection between Taylor Slough and its headwaters.

## POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION

The Frog Pond and Transitional Lands are an integral part of the C-111/Taylor Slough Interim Plan and the Corps' C-111 General Re-evaluation Report project, both of which would result in restoration of natural freshwater hydropatterns to Florida Bay. Observations of seagrass die-offs, mangrove losses, reduced fisheries, and algal blooms provide strong evidence that Florida Bay is declining under current water-management practices.

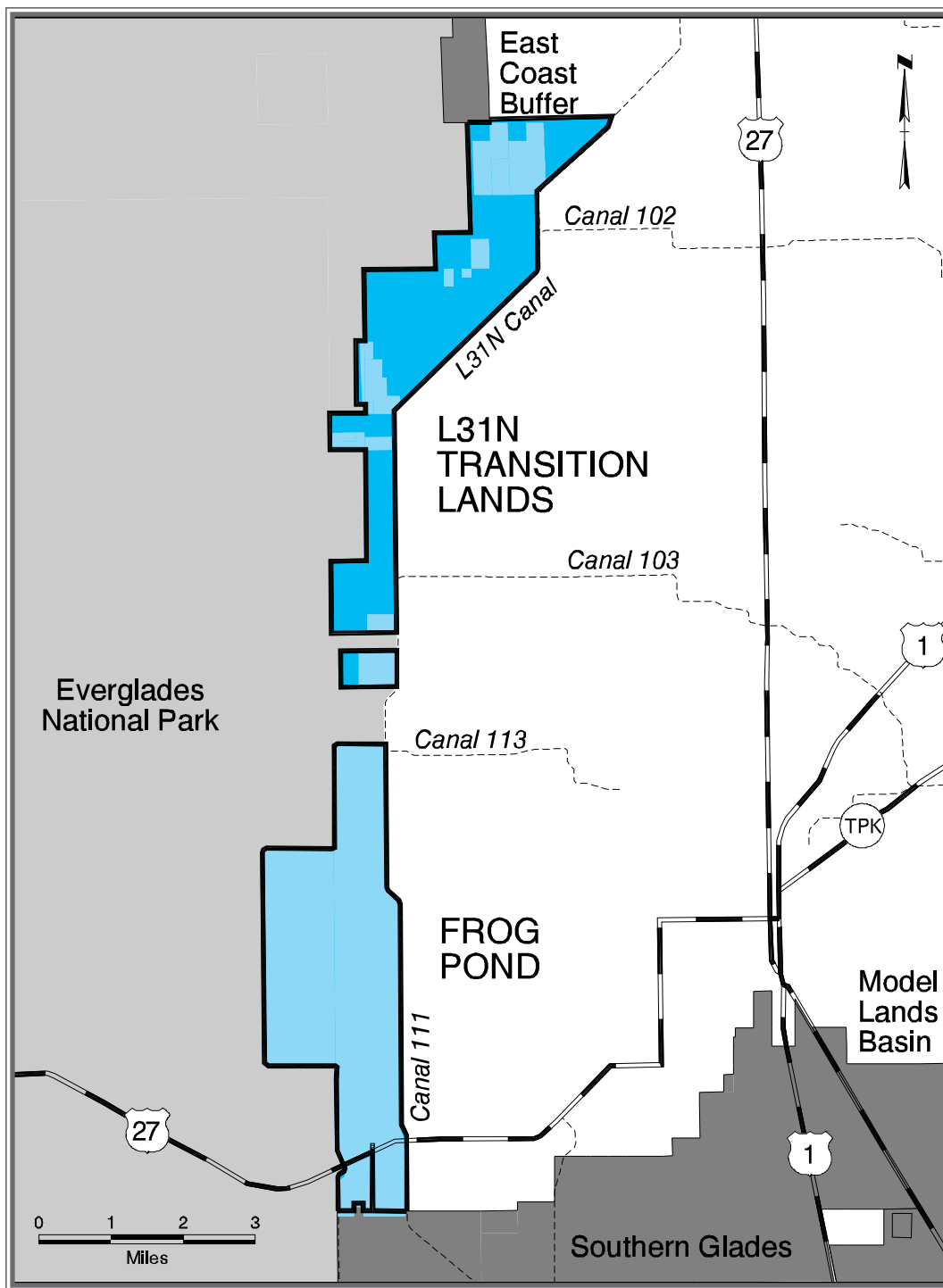
Current deliveries of fresh water to the bay differ in volume, timing and distribution from its pre-managed conditions. In addition, Taylor Slough in Everglades National Park will be enhanced through the improved hydropatterns and reestablishment of sheet-flow over existing wetlands under this project.

## POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER

Capital improvements, such as canals, levees, weirs, and pumps will be limited to those necessary to achieve the proposed water-resource benefits. Removal of existing canals and levees along the western boundary of the Frog Pond will be examined as part of the preferred C-111 General Re-evaluation Report alternative. The area will be managed in accordance with plans to restore Taylor Slough and Florida Bay. The District, Corps, and the National Park Service will develop these plans.

## RECREATION POTENTIAL

As part of the overall planning process, restoration of scenic benefits at the entrance to Everglades National Park and other public recreational values will be examined. Potential public uses will also be examined for their effects on environmental sensitivity and water-management values of the lands.



County:  
**Dade**

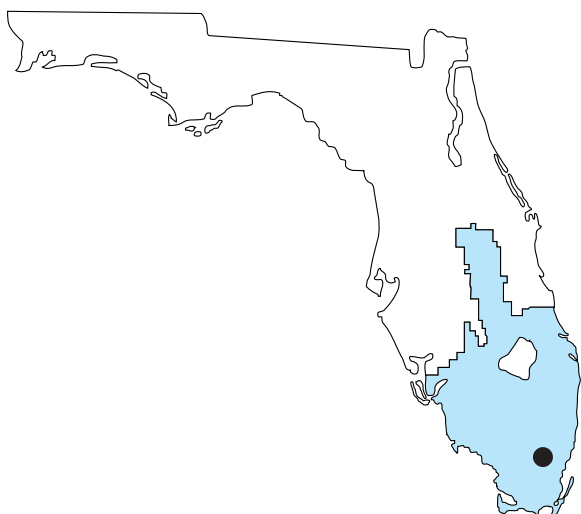
Total Project Area:  
**10,600 acres**







Total Acres Acquired:  
**\*6,853**

Acres Remaining:  
**\*3,782**

Number of Owners:  
**Numerous**

(\*Nic Lands Acquired by  
CARL)



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Areas
-  Other Conservation Areas
-  Other SOR Projects
-  1997 Project Additions
-  SOR Project Boundary

# *Indian River Lagoon*

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Indian River Lagoon project consists of two tracts on Hutchinson Island in St. Lucie County totaling 535 acres. These are mosquito impoundments located between State Road A1A and the Indian River. The lands represent the only undeveloped parcels along the Indian River in St. Lucie County not in public ownership or for which no attempts for acquisition have been made.

In 1997 the District added approximately 1,015 acres to the project, bringing it to a total of 1,550 acres.

All remaining impoundment marshes along the St. Lucie County portion of the Indian River are either publicly owned or have been proposed for acquisition through various grant programs. Public ownership allows the county mosquito-control program to manage the lands together with Florida DEP permits and best management practices prescribed in the Indian River Lagoon SWIM Plan.

Best management practices include installation of operable water-control structures that allow flushing of the mosquito impoundments during most of the year (eight months) and the application of only biorational compounds to control mosquitoes. If these areas remain private and not under county management, mosquitoes are controlled with aerial applications of chemical pesticides. These private areas are also not connected with the Indian River, which deprives the estuary of an important source of mangrove detrital matter.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES**

These areas are critical to the water management of the Indian River Lagoon. If they remain in private hands, water-control structures to allow flushing of the impoundments cannot be installed. Connection with the lagoon to allow mangrove leaves and the juvenile marine life produced in these areas is critical to the health of the estuary.

## **POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION**

The shallow waters of the impoundments are important nursery areas for approximately 80 percent of the commercial and sport fishery species in the lagoon. Following construction of the dikes and the separation of the marshes from the estuary, most of the

estuarine-related habitat functions of the marsh were lost. Under county management, water-control structures would be left open for seven to eight months each year, allowing daily flushing and reflooding of the impoundments. Besides mangrove and salt-marsh wetlands, the sites contain approximately 15 percent tropical hammocks and freshwater wetlands.

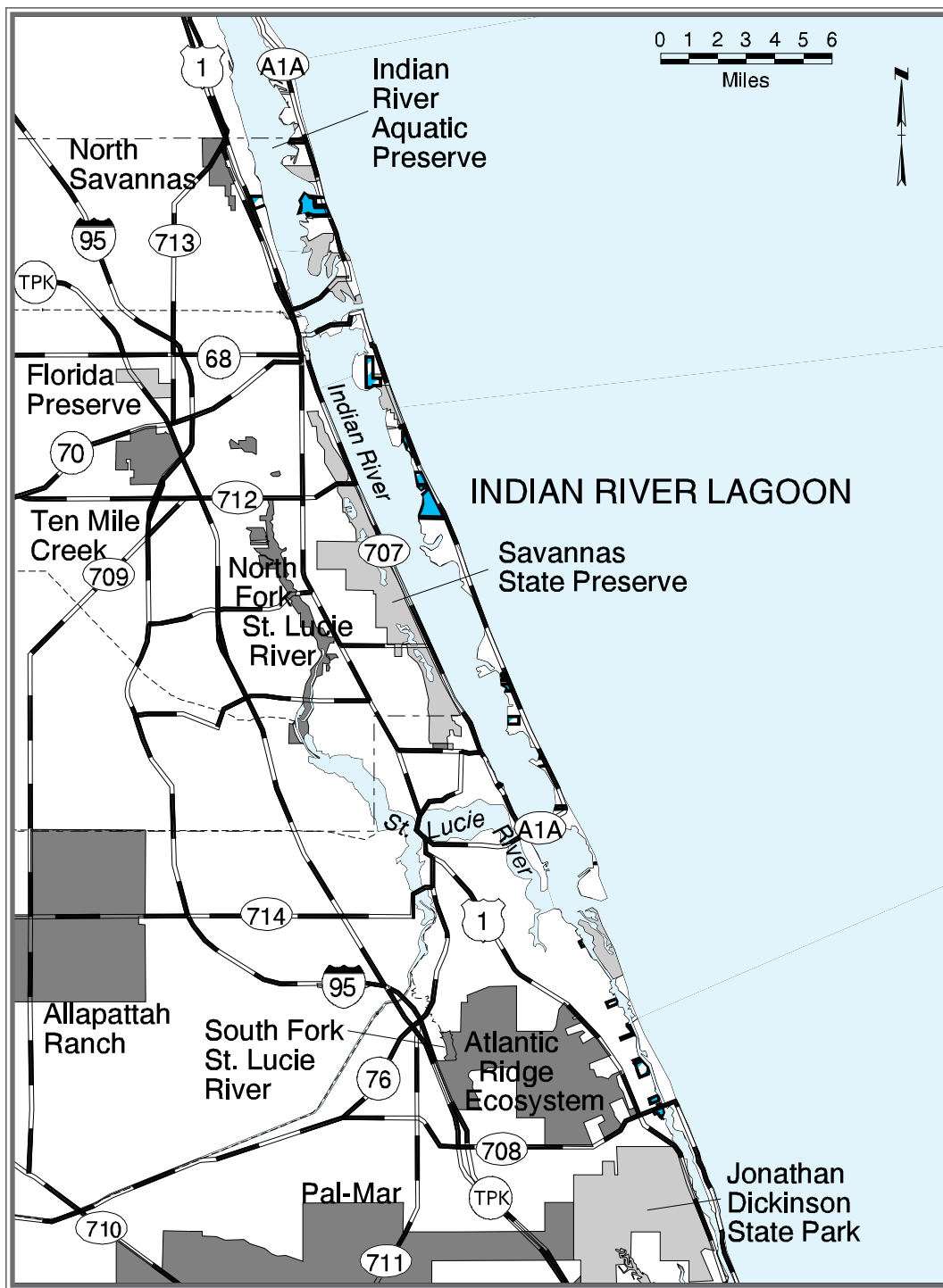
Research conducted on mosquito impoundments reports a reduction in transient fish species use in the impoundments from 16 species to 5, following construction of impoundment dikes. The installation of culverts to allow regular tidal flushing improves species diversity dramatically.

## **POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER**

Management of both tracts would be the responsibility of St. Lucie County Mosquito Control. Its current management practices promote environmental and hydrologic restoration and non-chemical control methods for mosquitoes. Control of exotic vegetation will be necessary.

## **RECREATION POTENTIAL**

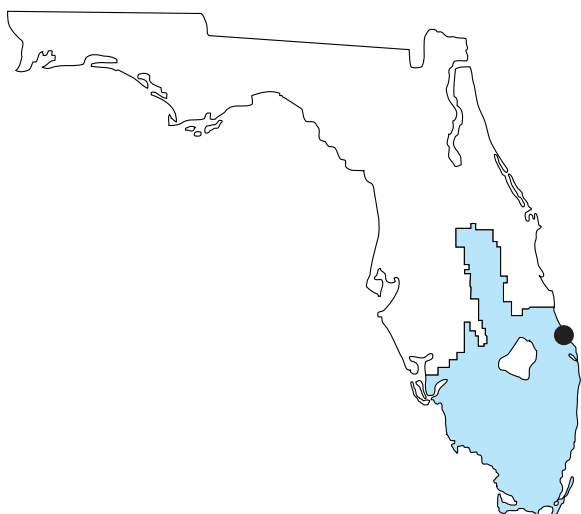
These sites may have some use as bird watching and fishing sites, and hiking trails could be constructed along the impoundment dikes, but it is unlikely that extensive recreational development would ever take place.









County:  
**St. Lucie**

Total Project Area:  
**1,550 acres**

Number of Owners:  
**Numerous**



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Areas
-  Other Conservation Areas
-  Other SOR Projects
-  1997 Project Additions
-  SOR Project Boundary

# Kissimmee Prairie Ecosystem

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Kissimmee Prairie Ecosystem is in Okeechobee County, east of the C-38 canal, and totals approximately 46,000 acres. In 1997, the District and CARL purchased of the entire tract.

Approximately 7,000 acres of the purchase lie within the boundary of the Kissimmee River restoration project. The remaining 39,000 acres form one of the most unique land mosaics in the state. The dominant community type is dry prairie and, according to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, is endangered at the state and global levels. Because of the conversion of similar lands to citrus and improved pasture, this tract is likely the largest and best example of its type remaining in the world.

## IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES

Four major tributaries to the Kissimmee River have their headwaters on the property and discharge into the river (Pool B) along the western project boundary. Land elevations drop from 70' NGVD near the eastern boundary to 42' at the river, across a distance of 9-12 miles. Although the dominant land feature is dry prairie, there are extensive wetlands scattered throughout. Basin and depression marshes, and wet prairies vary in size from less than one acre to more than 500 acres, and all are in excellent condition. There are ten separate community types, all of which are mostly undisturbed, and the size and quality of the communities provide breeding habitat for a number of listed wildlife species.

## POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION

This project has been identified by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission as a Strategic Habitat Conservation Area in their 1994 publication *Closing the Gaps in Florida's Wildlife Habitat Conservation System*. National Audubon's 7,400 acre Kissimmee Prairie Sanctuary lies immediately west of the project and has a 3.5 mile long common boundary. The Audubon property is dominated by dry prairie, as well, which expands the coverage of that community type and its associated wildlife. This project forms an integral connection with the Kissimmee River acquisition lands.

To the west of the river lies the 100,000+ acres Avon Park Bombing Range, much of which is managed as a natural area.

## POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER

Overall, the property is in excellent condition. For the past 60 years, it has been operated as a cattle ranch, with no improved pasture. Most of Seven Mile Slough has been channelized, but restoration could probably be accomplished relatively easy with a series of earthen plugs. The major management tool will be prescribed fire. The dry prairie community is likely maintained with a high fire frequency, so annual burning of large tracts will be required.

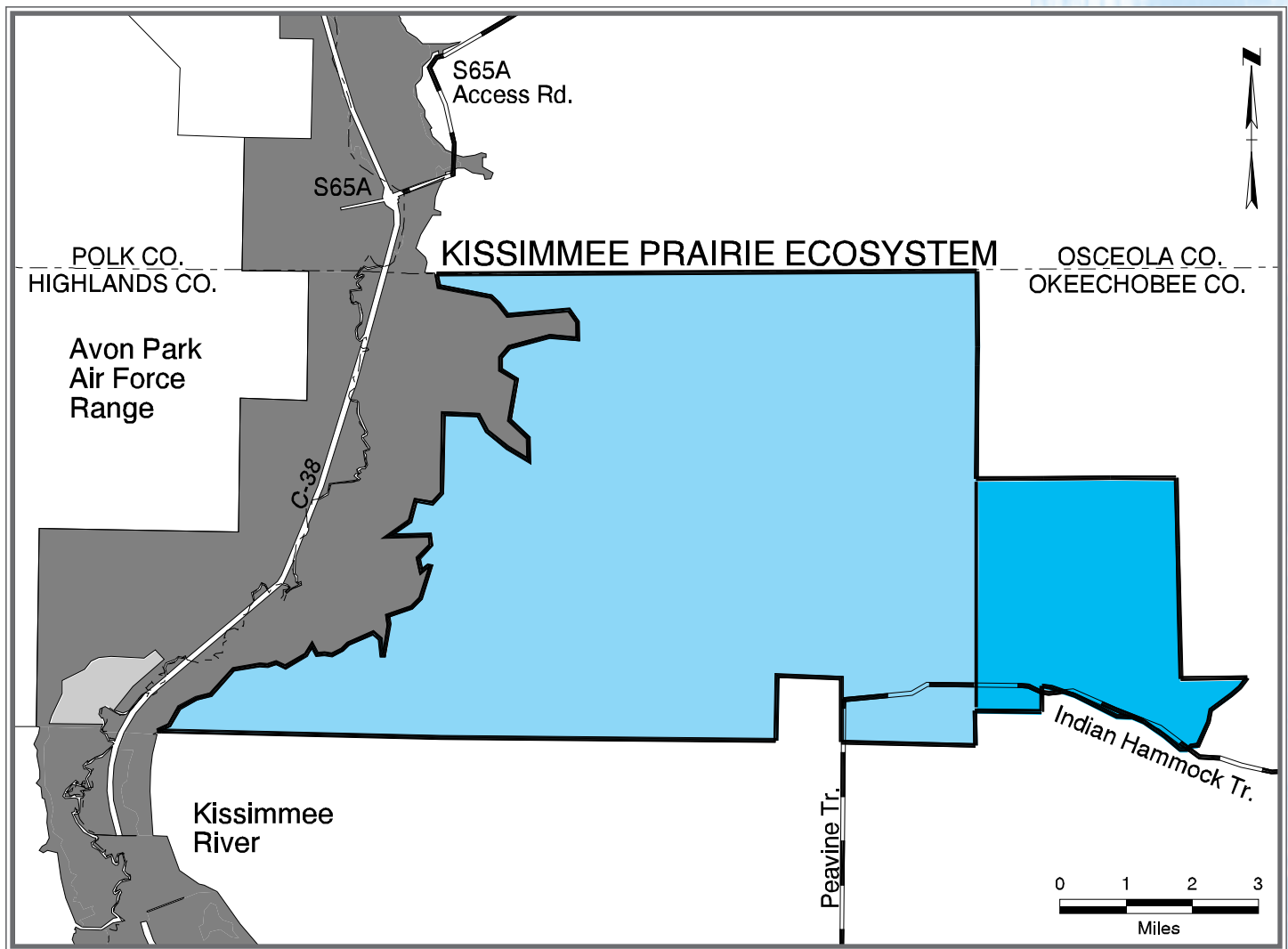
## RECREATION POTENTIAL

This tract has excellent recreational and educational opportunities. The property's size, diversity, and accessibility lend it to a variety of passive uses. Hiking and equestrian trails, including wilderness camping areas for both are possible. There are extensive educational and research opportunities.

## PROJECT VISION

The property will be managed as a state park, under the name Kissimmee Prairie State Preserve. At this time, the project is still in the planning phase. An on-site preserve manager has been assigned to the project, and biological, environmental, and public-use assessments are under way.

The preserve is presently open to walk-in recreation only. Eventually, a series of hiking trails with wilderness camping and equestrian trails will be developed, as well as a preserve headquarters and information center. Vehicle access to the property is a limiting factor at this time.



County:

**Okeechobee**

Total Project Area:

**45,631 acres**

Total Acres Acquired:

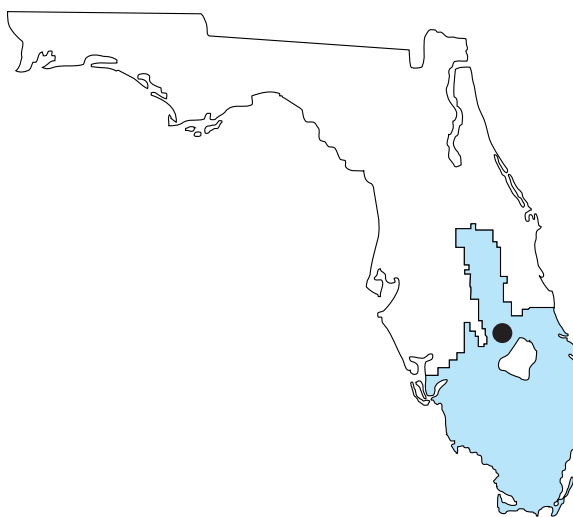
**38,315 acres**

Lands within Audobon  
Sanctuary:

**7,315**

Number of Owners:

**One**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary



# Kissimmee River (Lower Basin)

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The entire Kissimmee River Save Our Rivers Project includes lands in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and along the Kissimmee River. The SOR project also contains the Kissimmee River restoration project, which encompasses land in the upper and lower basins and covers an estimated 88,000 acres.

The District's objective is to acquire lands necessary to accomplish this restoration. This figure and the project map will be adjusted as surveys of the required areas are completed. In some areas, lands beyond the restoration project have characteristics that match Save Our Rivers criteria. The Five-Year Plan includes these lands. There are areas the District owns that are excess to the project needs. These lands are not shown on the project map.

The Kissimmee River, or lower basin, comprises the area required for the restoration under the governor's Save Our Everglades program. More than 57,000 acres in the basin represent the river's historic floodplain. In the lower basin, The District has acquired real property interests in more than 30,000 acres.

Between July 1, 1996, to June 30 1997, the District acquired 13,288 acres. The Governing Board approved acquisition of an additional 2,687 acres.

The District's rule governing public use of SOR and other District lands (Chapter 40E-7, Part V) became effective in 1994 after more than a year of public discussion and review. The District developed a public-use guide — which outlines the rule, the designated land-management areas, and the special applicable provisions — to assist those interested in reaching these lands. The

guide contains more detailed maps of Kissimmee River properties and specific information about public use on each management area. Copies of the public-use guide are available at the District's headquarters and area offices.

## PROJECT VISION

The Kissimmee River once meandered 98 miles between Lake Kissimmee and Lake Okeechobee. After construction of the C-38 canal, the river became a nearly straight 56-mile-long, 300-foot-wide, 30-foot-deep channel. A few remnant oxbows, or old meanders, remain along the canal. The construction altered more than 47,000 acres of wetlands. The restoration will reestablish pre-channelization hydrologic characteristics along 52 miles of the original river channel and in 24,000 acres of floodplain.

Additional potential exists in portions of the river other than the targeted restoration. The project vision includes hydrologic restoration and enhancement of areas other than the river restoration. The Kissimmee River valley may offer many opportunities for public use. The strategy is to allow public use to occur at a level that does not impact upon the natural resources of the land.

## NATURAL RESOURCE

### MANAGEMENT

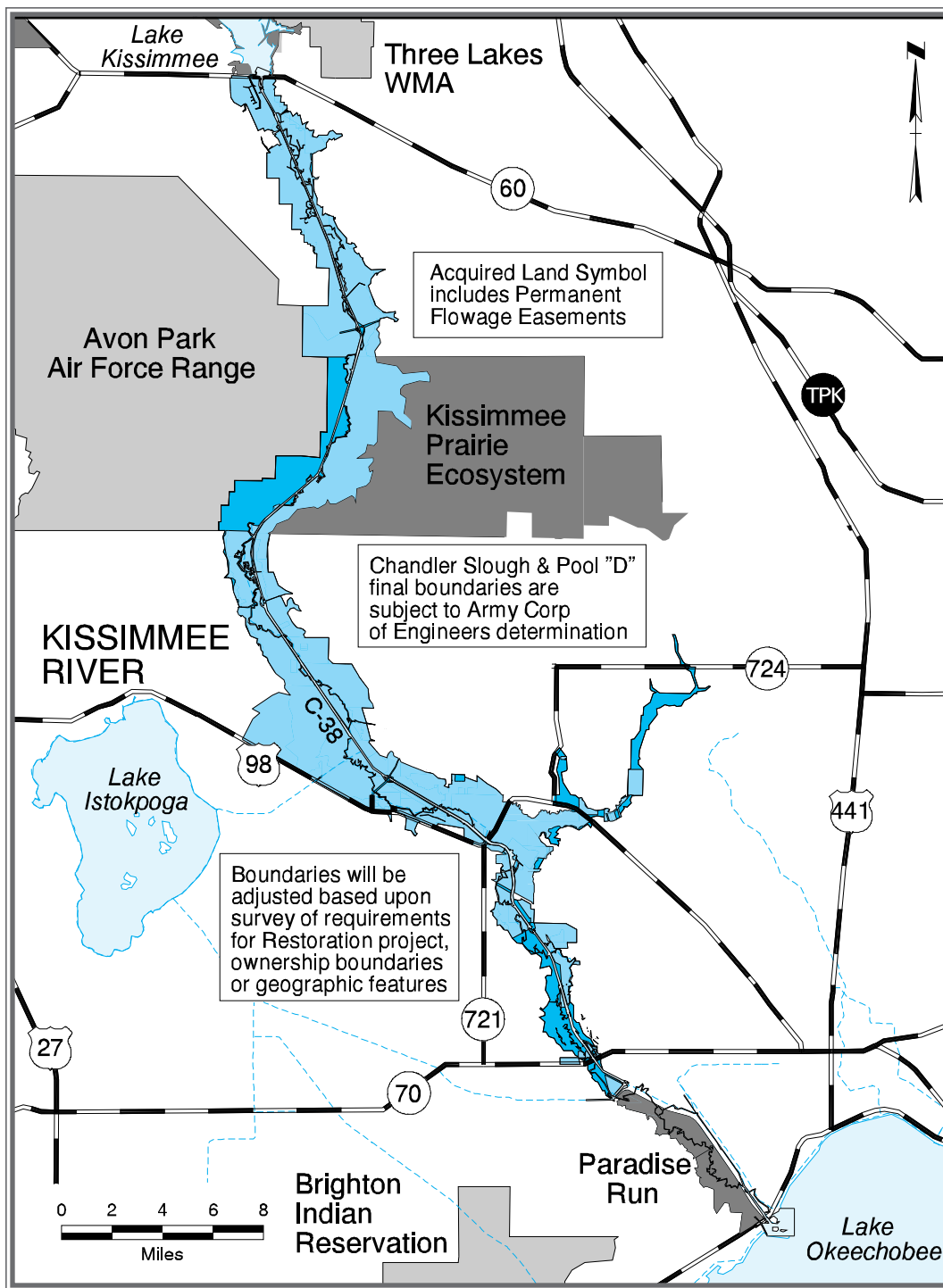
Activity	Acres	Proposed
Exotic Control	700	500
Fire Management	500	2,500
Mowing/Chopping	1,000	400
Restoration	300	200
	Ongoing	Complete
General Clean-up	•	
Waste Removal	•	
Fencing/Posting	•	
Security		
GFC	8,000	
Private	22,500	
On-site Caretakers	17,000	

## PUBLIC USE

	Yes	No
Fishing	•	
Hunting	•	
Hiking	•	
Horseback Riding		•
Bicycling	•	
Camping	•	
Airboating	•	
Environmental Education	•	

## PLANNING

	Ongoing	Complete
Conceptual Planning	•	
Hydrologic Restoration Plan	•	
Public Input		
Public Information Meetings		
Other		
Cooperative Management Agreement(s)		
County		
GFC		
FTA		



Counties:  
**Osceola, Polk and  
Okeechobee**

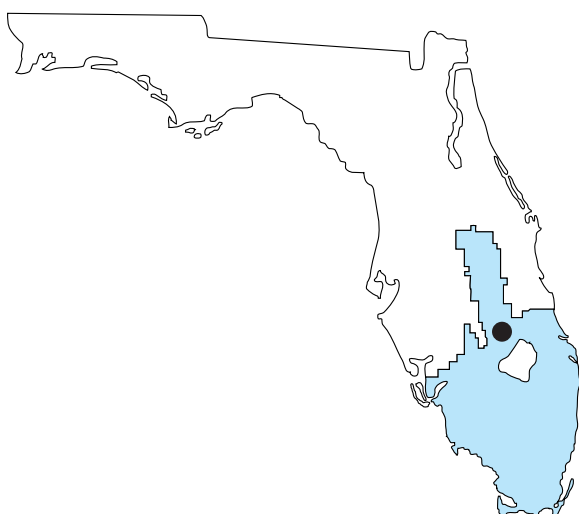
Total Project Area:  
**62,628**

Total Acres Acquired (SOR):  
**43,921**

Acres Remaining:  
**334**

Acres Acquired by Others:  
**5,510**

Acres Acquired Prior to SOR:  
**12,843**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary



# Kissimmee River (Upper Basin)

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The entire Kissimmee River Save Our Rivers Project includes lands in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and along the Kissimmee River. The SOR project also contains the Kissimmee River restoration project, which encompasses land in the upper and lower basins and covers an estimated 88,000 acres.

The District's objective is to acquire lands necessary to accomplish this restoration. This figure and the project map will be adjusted as surveys of the required areas are completed.

In 1991, the District expanded the Kissimmee Upper Chain of Lakes project to include 24,000 acres of the shoreline in the upper basin. This includes 6,933 acres that meet the qualifications of the SOR program and are not part of the Kissimmee River restoration project.

During 1997, the District acquired 2,135 acres. Real property interests have been acquired in more than 23,000 acres. The state owns an additional 1,700 acres.

## PROJECT VISION

The District wants to acquire real property interests to allow stages in these lakes to be raised from 52.5' NGVD to 54' NGVD. The Kissimmee River restoration project needs this additional water for year-round flows.

The District is working with an advisory committee, assisted by a professional facilitator, to establish goals for management and public use of this project. The main objectives in managing these public lands are to ensure that the water resources, fish and wildlife populations, and native plant communities are maintained in an environmentally acceptable manner and are available for appropriate outdoor recreational activities consistent with their environmental sensitivity.

### NATURAL RESOURCE

#### MANAGEMENT

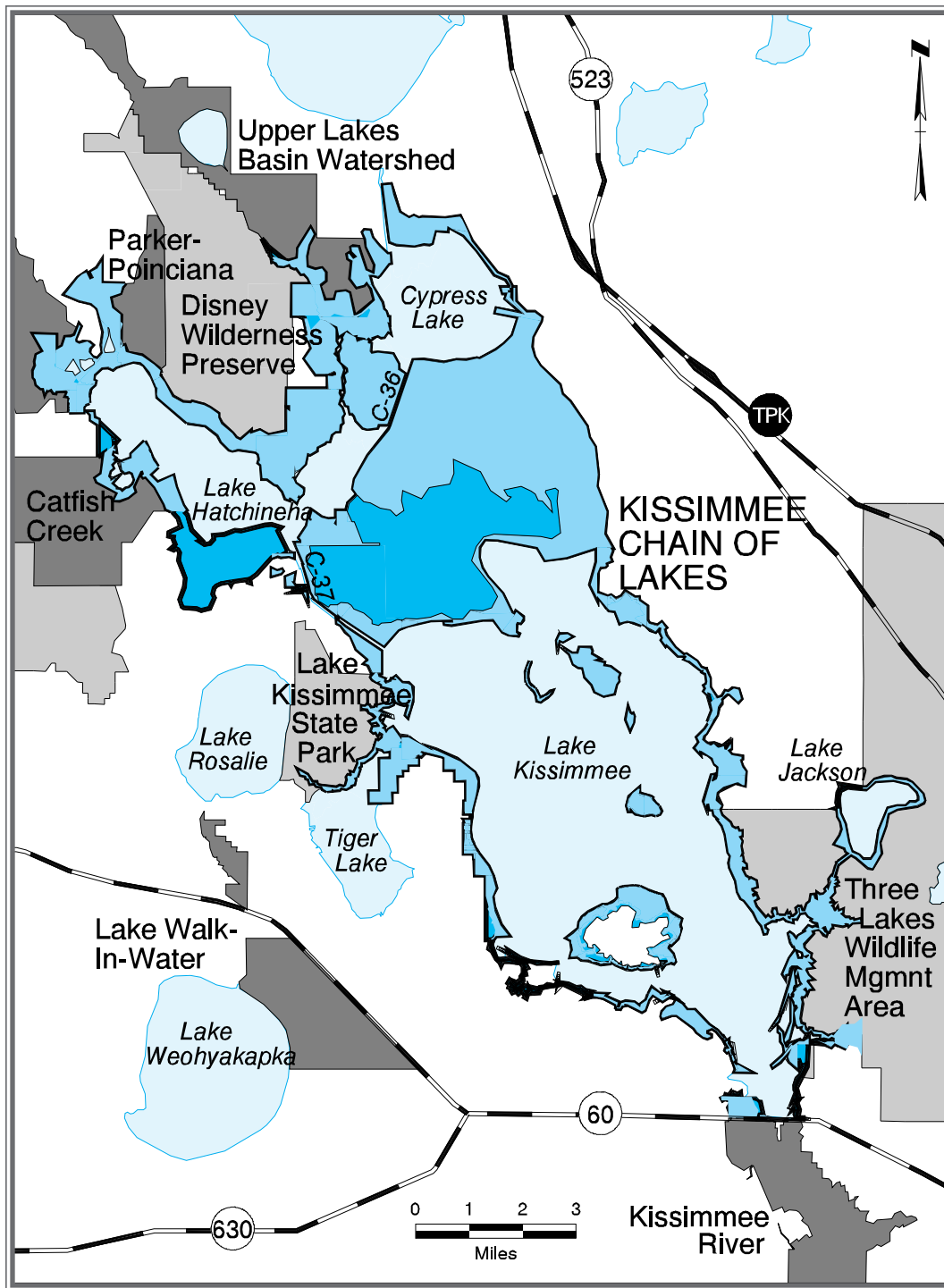
Activity	Acres	Proposed
Exotic Control	180	1,000
Fire Management	35	3,000
Mowing/Chopping		200
Grazing Lease Mgmt	12,300	
	Ongoing	Complete
General Clean-up	•	
Waste Removal		
Fencing/Posting	•	
Security		
Private	•	

### PUBLIC USE

	Yes	No
Fishing	•	
Hunting	•	
Hiking	•	
Horseback Riding	•	
Bicycling	•	
Camping	•	
Airboating	•	
Environmental Education		•

### PLANNING

	Ongoing	Complete
Conceptual Planning	•	
Hydrologic Restoration Plan		
Public Input		
Area-wide Committee		
Public Information Meetings		



Counties:  
**Osceola, Polk and  
Okeechobee**

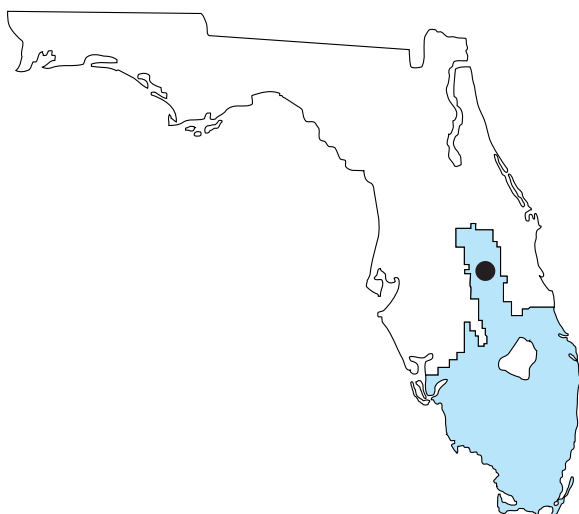
Total Project Area:  
**31,637 acres**

Total Acres Acquired:  
**26,715**

Acres Remaining:  
**3,222**

Acres Acquired by Others:  
**1,700**

**Note: Acquired symbol  
includes easements**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary

# Lake Lizzie

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Lake Lizzie project covers 1,082 acres in Osceola County, east of the town of St. Cloud. The project has frontage on three lakes Lizzie, Trout, and Bay. It also has road frontage along U.S. 192/441. The SOR tract lies at the extreme south end of a much larger CARL project, known as the Upper Econ Mosaic, which covers 31,343 acres.

In 1995, Osceola County applied to the Florida Communities Trust to purchase approximately 950 acres within the SOR portion of the Lake Lizzie project. Florida Communities Trust approved funding for the project, which means the property will be acquired if an agreement can be reached with the landowner.

## IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY AND THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES

Large basin marshes/wet prairies connect directly with Lake Lizzie and Trout Lake that provide important water management functions by containing storm runoff and slowly releasing it to the lakes. There is good species diversity in the plant communities. Scrub areas are present, but they have been disturbed. This site alone is too small and cut up to provide extensive habitat for terrestrial wildlife. When combined with the CARL project, however, large, contiguous tracts provide excellent habitat.

## POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION

The hydraulic connection of a large portion of the Trout Lake marsh has been severed by an electric transmission line access road that also serves as the project's eastern boundary. Re-establishment of sheetflow could probably be accomplished relatively easily if stabilized swale crossings were installed. The Lake Lizzie tract is cut up and urban development is encroaching all around, both of which will make prescribed burning difficult. The understories in the upland communities have grown up and are in need of burning. Some disturbance has occurred in the scrub and other upland sites. Bahia grass has been planted in most of the flatwoods areas.

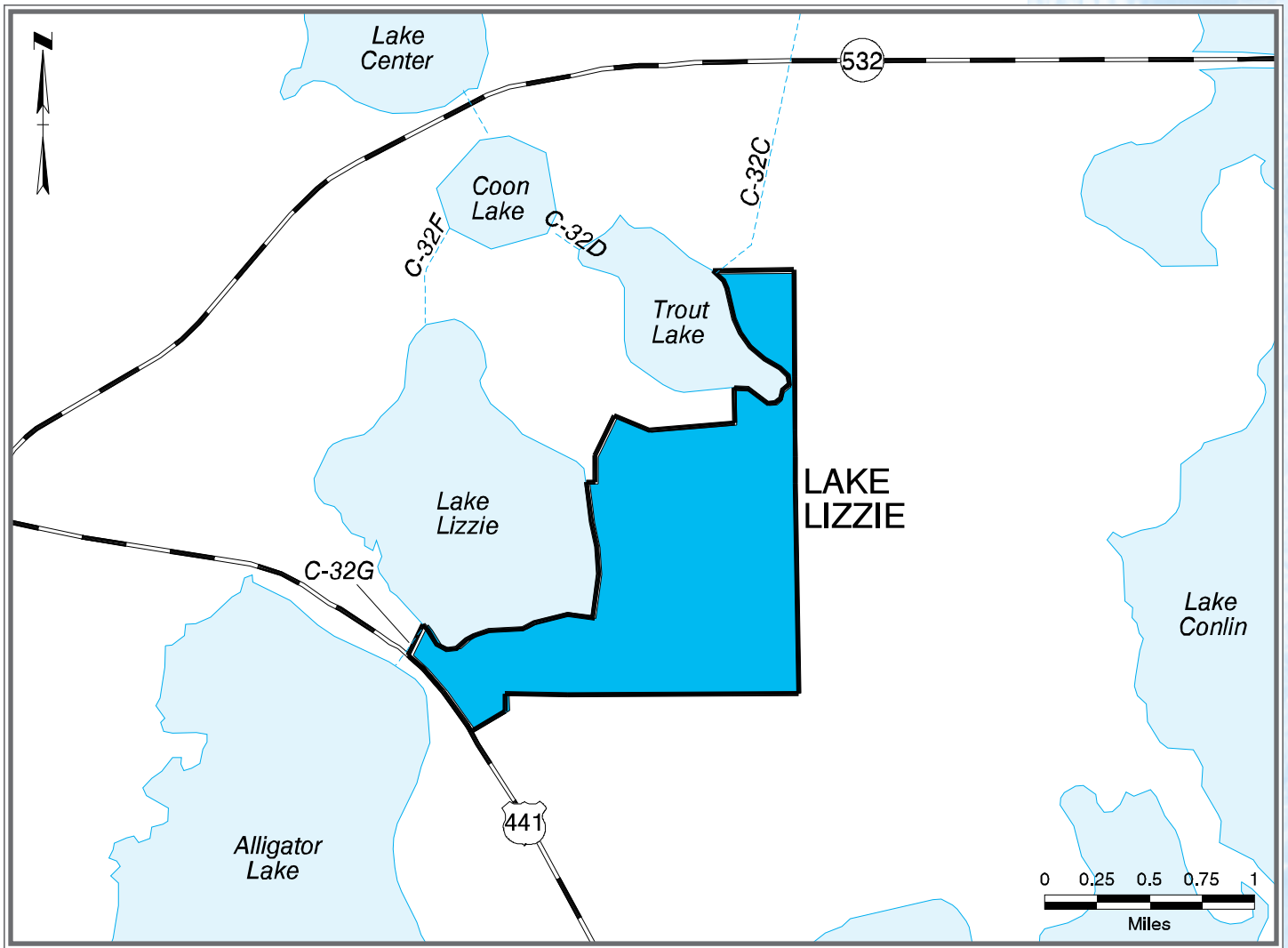
## POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER

The tract has highway frontage on US 192, and urban development is encroaching on several sides of the site. The eastern shore-

line of Lake Lizzie is particularly vulnerable since it is mostly scrub. Much of the lake shoreline and uplands is developable, and similar adjacent lands have been sold or are planned for residential development. Conducting prescribed burns on this tract will be difficult, given the proximity of nearby residential development and a major roadway. This site should be managed as part of the overall CARL project.

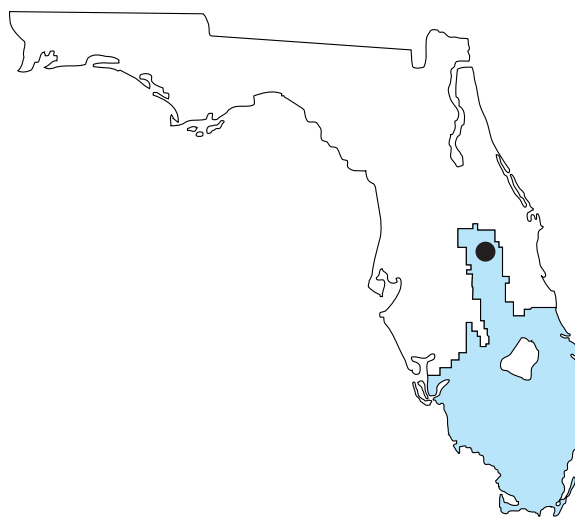
## RECREATION POTENTIAL

The recreational value of this tract on its own would probably be limited. The major vehicular access is through a residential subdivision. Some short hiking trails could probably be developed through the upland areas, but the site is too small for equestrian use. There may be some use of the site by boaters on Lake Lizzie. Public use could increase dramatically if it were part of a larger CARL acquisition.



County:  
**Osceola**

Total Project Area:  
**1,100 acres**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary

# Lake Walk-in-Water

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Lake Walk-in-Water project covers 4,109 acres between the northeast shore of Lake Weohyakapka (Walk-in-Water) and SR 60. The retirement communities of Nalcrest and Fedhaven border the property to the west and the community of Indian Lake Estates lies to the south. In September 1996, the Governing Board approved a 643 acre boundary modification which allows Walk-in-Water Creek to be included. The project has extensive frontage along SR 60 and Lake Walk-in-Water. The site has a large expanse of dry prairie, interspersed with small, isolated depression marshes, as well as a very large basin marsh along the highway. The property is in very good condition. Most of the disturbance is associated with the logging operation that took place in the Sumica settlement, which was in place on the property in the 1920's. Polk County will participate as a 50% acquisition partner, and will assist with management, as well.

## IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND THE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES

Walk-in-Water Creek lies along the western boundary. It flows north toward Lake Rosalie. The large central basin marsh appears to flow off site, under SR 60, toward Lake Kissimmee. The project has more than four miles of shoreline along Lake Walk-in-Water. The site is very diverse; it contains floodplain forest along the banks of the creek; hydric hammock along the lake shoreline; scrub; and a diverse mixture of dry prairie, mesic and wet flatwoods, and basin marsh/wet prairies containing isolated dome swamps.

## POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION

This tract is relatively undisturbed. It has been well maintained by the current owners. Maintaining the property in its existing condition will require diligent management, but the site does not need extensive restoration.

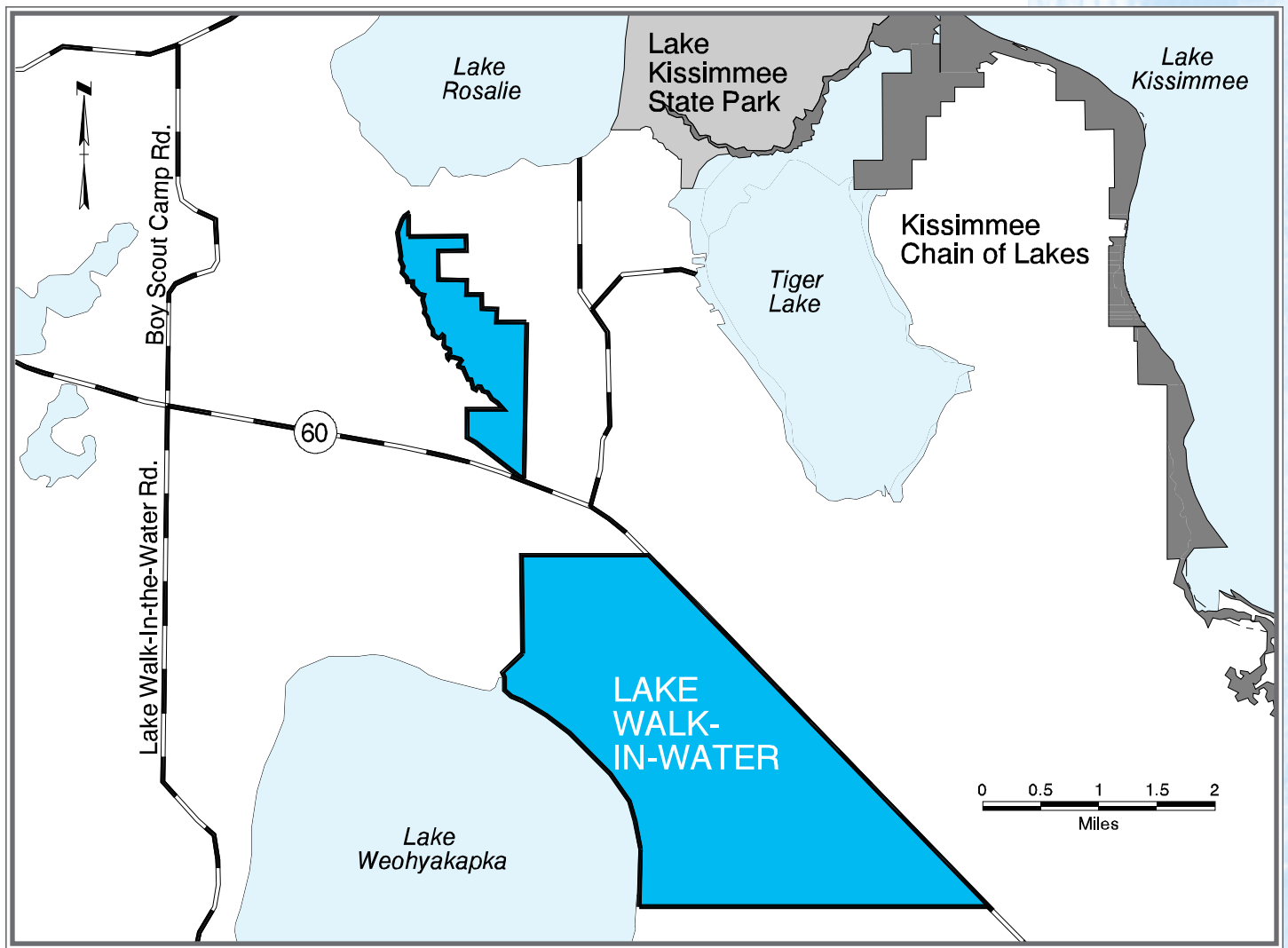
## POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER

The major management needs will center on prescribed burning. A large portion of the tract is dry prairie, which requires more frequent burning than other community types. Hydrologic restora-

tion will be limited to a few ditch plugs. Several ranch roads provide good management access to most of the site. A cattle dip vat is located on the property that will require special care. Polk County has indicated a willingness to participate as a management partner.

## RECREATION POTENTIAL

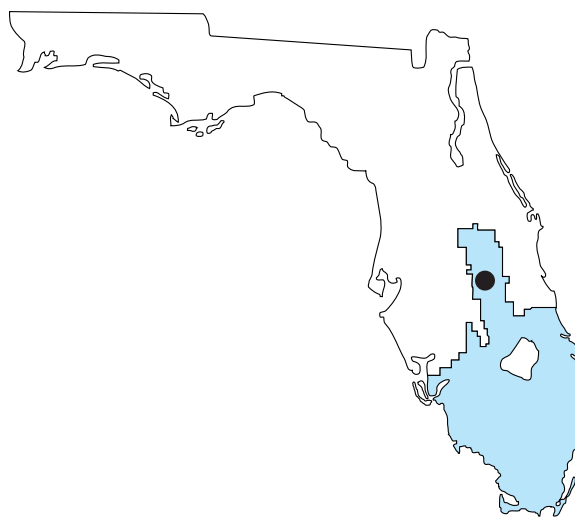
This tract has great recreation potential. Its long frontage on SR 60 would facilitate several public access points. Water access from the lake is also possible. The site contains enough uplands that equestrian trails can likely be developed. The variety of community types would make for interesting hiking trails and wilderness camping. A public hunting program could be developed together with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Polk County has indicated that they will accept full responsibility for any public use program development.



County:  
**Polk**

Total Project Area:  
**4,114 acres**

Number of Owners:  
**One**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary

# Loxahatchee River

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This project is in Palm Beach and Martin Counties. This property is south of and adjacent to Jonathan Dickinson State Park and continues south along the river floodplain to Canal 18 in Jupiter. The Florida Turnpike, I-95 and Indiantown Road bisect this property in two places. The portion of the property south of Indiantown road is east and adjacent to River Bend County Park. The property includes the historic flood plain of the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River, a National Wild and Scenic River.

The District and DEP are working to implement the Loxahatchee River Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, which was prepared in 1985 (revised 1997) as a requirement for inclusion of this portion of the river in the National Wild and Scenic River System. Lands north of Indiantown Road (State Road 706) are managed by DEP, with Jonathan Dickinson State Park. Lands south of the highway are managed by Palm Beach County under a separate agreement with the District. Management activities include law enforcement, prescribed burning, exotic species control, public-use regulation, development of hiking trails, interpretive programs and supervision of mitigation projects.

## PROJECT VISION

Preservation and enhancement of the outstanding natural and cultural values of Florida's only federally designated Wild and Scenic River are the primary goals of the management program.

Permanent protection and enhancement of the river will be accomplished through land acquisition, effective resource management, regulation of the river corridor, a law enforcement presence, local government land use controls and volunteer support. Effective resource management of the river corridor must account for activities within the whole Loxahatchee River Basin, and adjacent uplands.

The District's vision for the water resources of the river includes: 1) maintaining surface water and groundwater flows to the Northwest Fork, 2) increasing minimum flows to the river as much as possible to affect downstream movement of the saltwater wedge during dry conditions, and 3) maintaining existing water quality in the River by eliminating identified water quality problems when possible.

The Federally designated wild and scenic river contains three designations: wild, scenic and recreational. The section of the river containing the "wild," designation will be managed less intensively than the "scenic" or "recreational" segments. The "wild" designation implies primitive shorelines, unpolluted water, river accessibility only by trail, and no alterations to the river bed itself. "Scenic" is defined as river areas free of impoundments with shorelines, largely primitive and undeveloped. These areas may be accessible by roads. "Recreational" river segments are readily accessible by roads; the river bed may have been impounded or diverted in the past and some development may exist along the shoreline.

## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

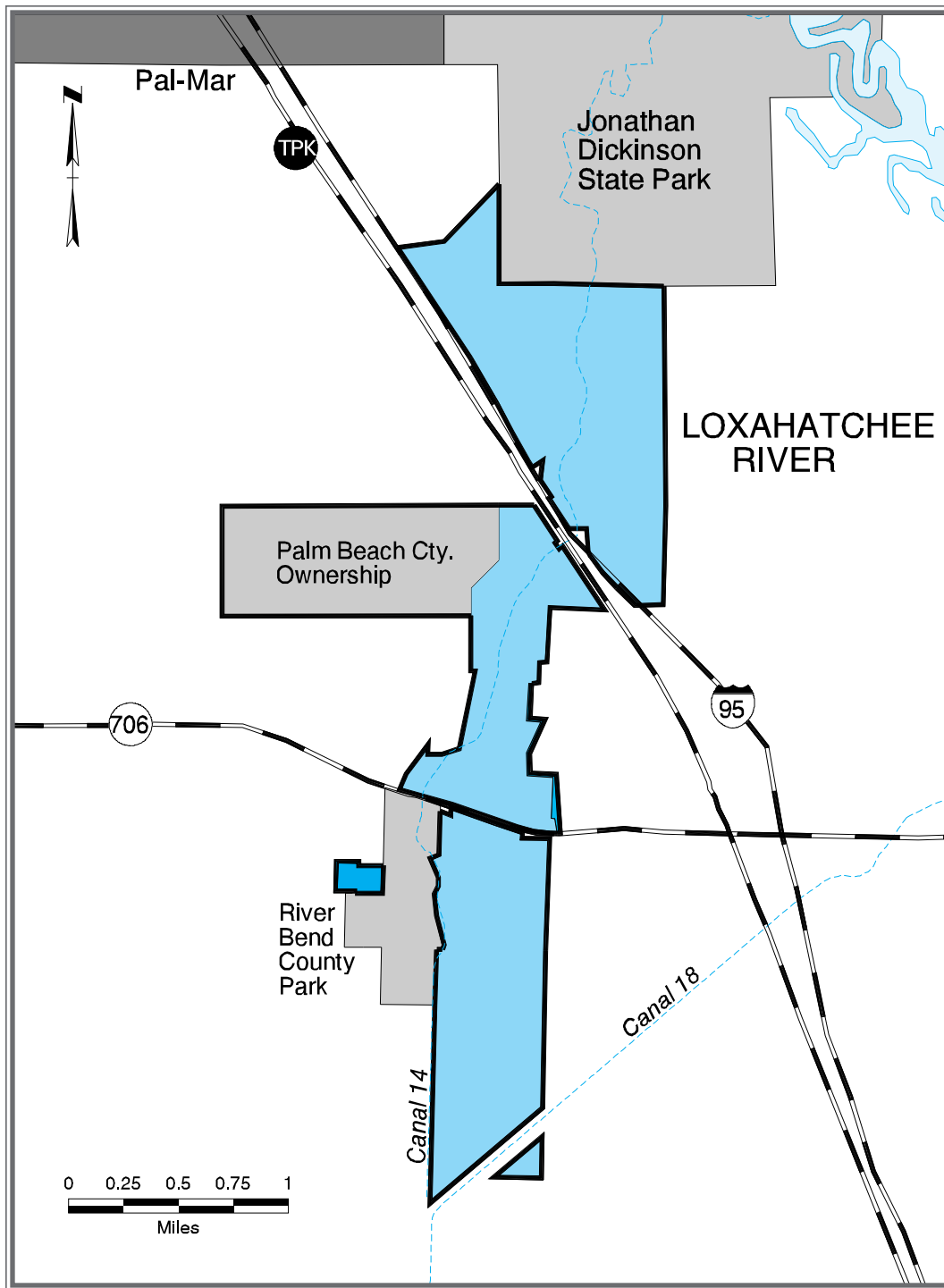
Activity	Acres	Proposed
Exotic Control	200	987
Fire Management		1,000
Mowing/Chopping	200	200
Restoration		1,200
	Ongoing	Complete
General Clean-up		•
Waste Removal		•
Fencing/Posting	•	
Security		
County	•	
DEP - State Park	•	

## PUBLIC USE

	Yes	No
Fishing	•	
Hunting		•
Hiking	•	
Horseback Riding		•
Bicycling		•
Camping		•
Airboating		•
Environmental Education•		
Greenway System		
Loxahatchee River		
Lake Okeechobee to Atlantic Ocean		

## PLANNING

	Ongoing	Complete
Conceptual Planning	•	
Hydrologic Restoration		
Plan	•	
Public Input		
Public Information Meetings		
Loxahatchee River Coordinating Council		
Cooperative Management Agreement(s)		
Palm Beach County		
DEP		



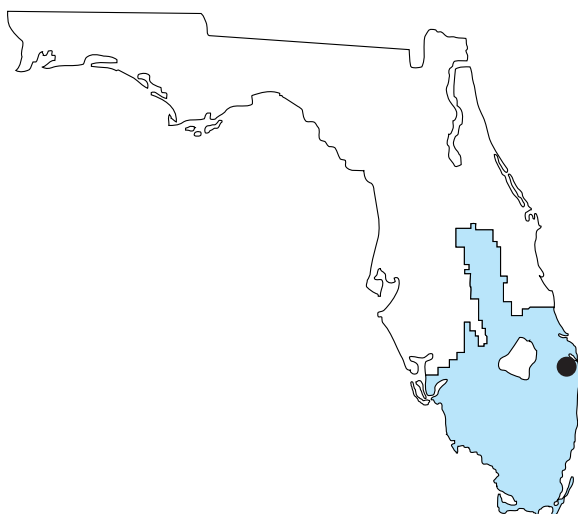
Counties:  
**Martin and Palm Beach**

Total Project Area:  
**1,936 acres**

Total Acres Acquired:  
**1,926**

Acres Remaining:  
**10**

Acres Acquired by Others:  
**379**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary

# *Loxahatchee Slough*

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Loxahatchee Slough is in Palm Beach County and covers more than 14,000 acres. It contains a mixture of habitats, including pine flatwoods, cypress forest, and wet prairie. The present land use is native range.

In 1996, Palm Beach County purchased the major portion of the slough — more than 10,400 acres. In 1997, the District amended the boundaries and added approximately 1,300 acres to the project. The addition, known as the “Sandhill Tract,” contains a number of sandhill crane nests within the isolated wetlands. Agricultural use has impacted the site over the years. It has been in row crops, but is now mostly unimproved pasture, which is heavily infested with exotic vegetation.

Acquisition of this site has important hydrologic considerations that would help relieve operational problems with the C-18 canal and allow more water to be directed to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES**

The additional lands border the property that Palm Beach County recently acquired. Purchasing the Sandhill Tract would allow important hydrologic restoration to take place, benefiting not only the on-site wetlands, but providing the Southwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River with much needed fresh water.

## **POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION**

The sandhill crane site presently drains to the north and into the West Leg of the C-18 canal. During heavy rains, runoff entering C-18 from the Loxahatchee Slough causes drainage problems for the Caloosa subdivision. This, in turn, requires the District to open water-control structures in C-18 that divert water to the ocean rather than into the Southwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River. Acquisition of this site will allow the District restore historic sheetflow conditions to the east, which will relieve the flooding problems in Caloosa and allow water to go the river.

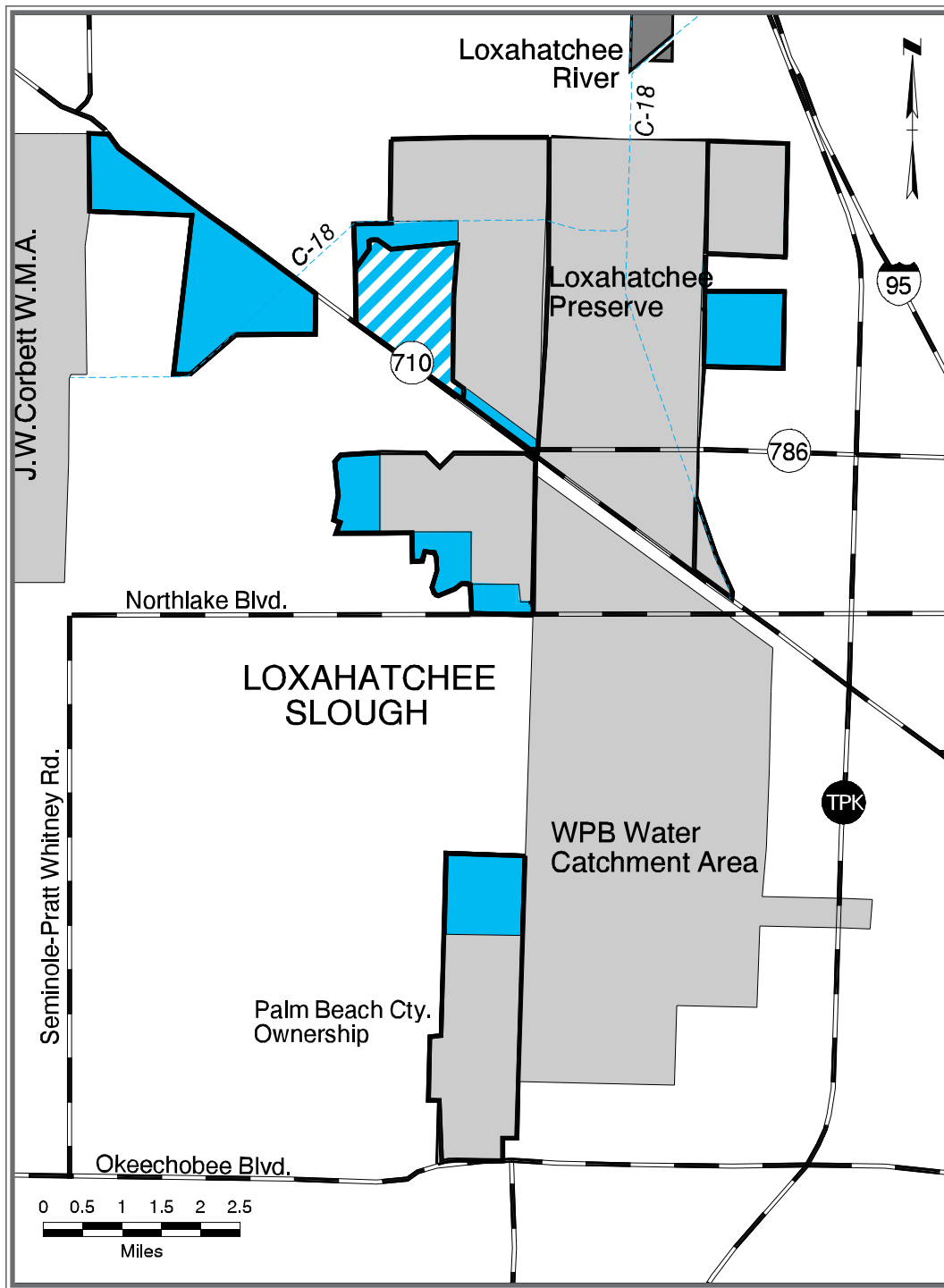
## **POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER**

Since Palm Beach County has already acquired the majority of

the project and will be the lead manager, we anticipate turning over management responsibility of the Sandhill Tract to them as well. It is likely, however, that the District will retain responsibility for hydrologic restoration.

## **RECREATION POTENTIAL**

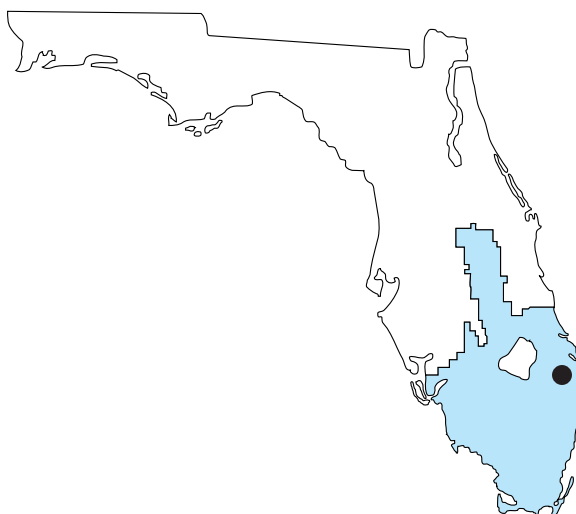
The Sandhill Tract is heavily infested with exotic vegetation. However, this site will likely be incorporated into the overall public-use component for the entire Loxahatchee Slough project, which will include hiking and equestrian trails, as well as through hiking and wilderness camping opportunities along an extension of the Florida Trail.









County:  
**Palm Beach**

Total Project Area:  
**15,200 acres**

Number of Owners:  
**Numerous**



-  SOR Lands Acquired to Date
-  Potential Acquisition Areas
-  Other Conservation Areas
-  Other SOR Projects
-  1997 Project Additions
-  SOR Project Boundary



# *McDaniel Ranch*

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

McDaniel Ranch covers nearly 23,000 acres in southeastern Hendry County. However, the area under consideration as an SOR project is 5,000-6,000 acres. The property owners have approached the District about selling a conservation easement in conjunction with an application for a surface water management permit. As proposed, the conservation easement would include only those lands not required for the surface water management system. The easement would grant the McDaniel family the following rights: timber management, cattle grazing, lease hunting, and eco-tourism.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES**

McDaniel Ranch lies in the District's L-3/L-4 Basin and drains south onto lands owned by the Seminole Tribe of Florida and into the Big Cypress National Preserve. Protecting the quality of the water leaving McDaniel Ranch is vitally important to the health of adjacent ecosystems. Much of the ranch has been converted to improved pasture, and over the next 15-20 years, most of the pasture will be converted to sugar cane. In spite of agricultural use, the preserve areas within the easement consist of deep cypress swamps, hydric hammocks, and large expanses of broadleaf marsh and wet prairie.

## **POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION**

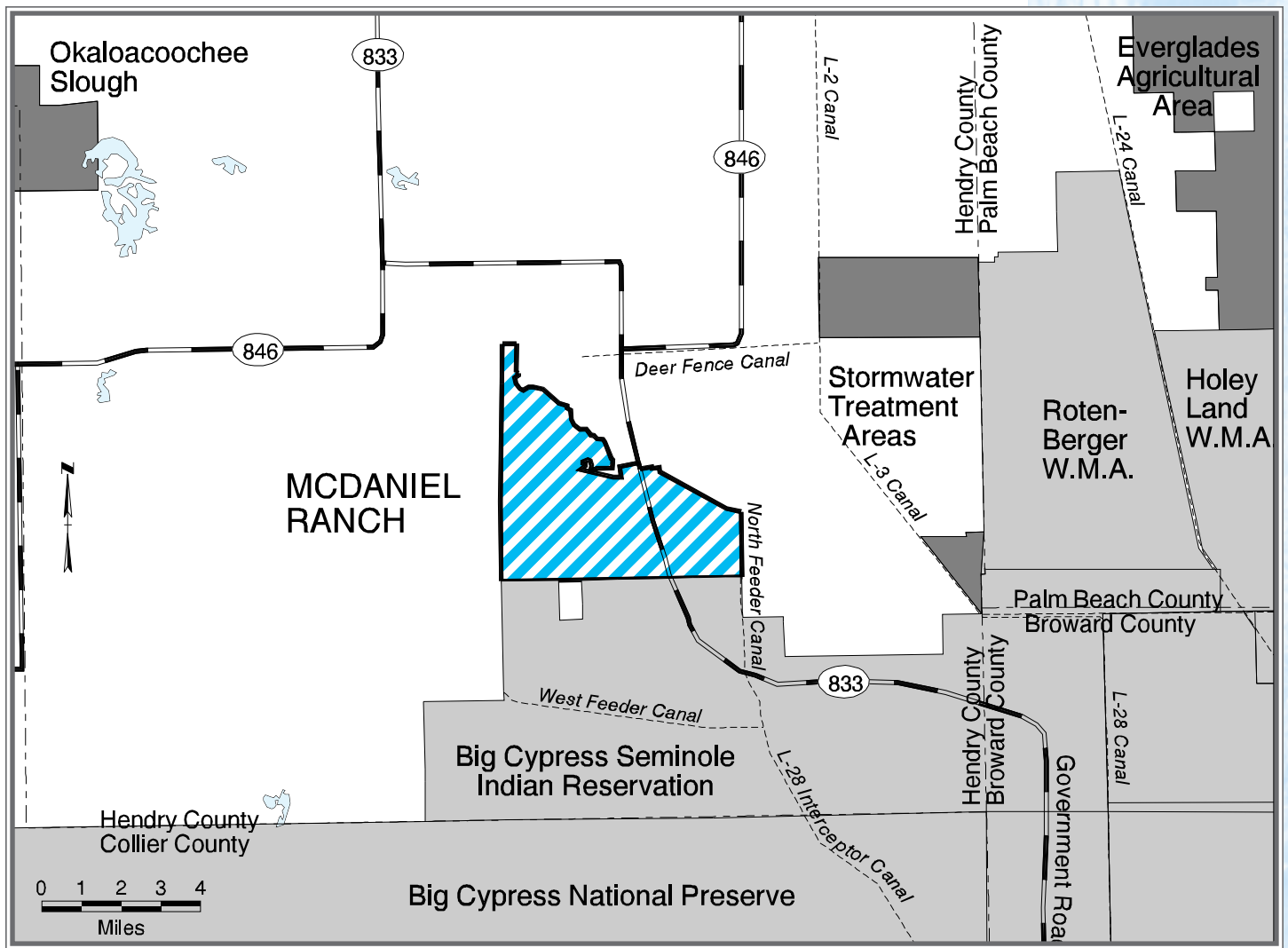
Restrictions in the conservation easement will prevent the owners from clearing additional land for pasture or silviculture, excavation, or fertilization of areas other than existing improved pastures. The greatest expanses of natural area are concentrated along the western and southern edges of the ranch. The Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission has identified this area as critical habitat for the Florida panther and black bear. Incorporation of the preserve areas into the diked detention areas for the surface water management system will enable some overdrained wetlands to be inundated again.

## **POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER**

Since the property will be sold as a conservation easement rather than fee title, the landowners will retain management responsibility. The ranch has been family-owned and managed for more than 60 years, and the natural areas are in very good condition. The landowner will be responsible for continued treatment of exotic vegetation and prescribed burning. The District will conduct a baseline environmental assessment to establish current environmental conditions so the agency can evaluate the management program.

## **RECREATION POTENTIAL**

The District is not acquiring public-access rights as part of the easement, so there will be no opportunities for public use.

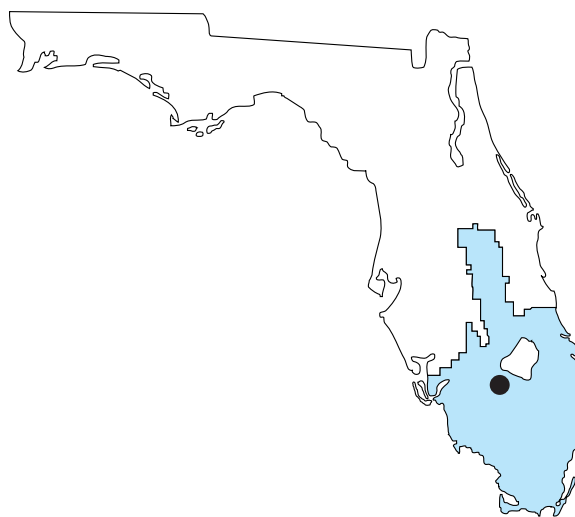


Counties:

**Hendry**

Total Project Area:

**7,000 acres**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary



# *Model Lands Basin*

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

This project is located primarily in Dade County, with a very small portion on the edge of Monroe County. The cooling ponds at the Florida Power & Light Turkey Point nuclear power plant are not included in the project boundary.

The project area includes a variety of habitats, both freshwater and estuarine. The northwestern corner has been invaded by Australian pine and Brazilian pepper, but the great majority of the site is exotic-free. The majority of the tract is undisturbed fresh and salt water wetlands. The dominant freshwater habitat type is wet prairie, interspersed with tree islands. Vegetation includes red bay, dahoon holly, cocoplum and buttonbush in the freshwater upland islands, and red, white and black mangroves in the estuarine islands.

These lands form a contiguous habitat corridor with Everglades National Park, Southern Glades SOR project, Biscayne National Park, Crocodile Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, the north Key Largo CARL purchases, John Pennekamp State Park, and the existing National Marine Sanctuary.

Between July 1996 and September 1997, the District acquired 1,270 acres. The Board approved the acquisition of additional 25 acres.

## **IMPORTANCE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER SUPPLY, AND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES**

The sheet flow of water across this area provides high quality freshwater to the estuarine areas of Card Sound, Barnes Sound and Manatee Bay. Card Sound is classified as both an Aquatic Preserve and Outstanding Florida Water. This basin is a primary source of overland freshwater flow for Biscayne National Park and the southern portions of Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve.

This area functions as a recharge area for maintenance of the salt-barrier line thus serving an important function for the prevention of further saltwater intrusion into the region.

## **POTENTIAL FOR RESTORING AND/OR PROTECTING NATURAL STATE AND CONDITION**

This area is habitat for many threatened and endangered species including; Florida panthers, American crocodiles, wood storks, the coast leather fern, and the silver palm. This area is federally designated as critical habitat for the American crocodile. Natural communities are still in excellent condition for the most part. With the

shoreline of Biscayne National Park, this area forms the longest undeveloped strip of red mangroves on the east coast of Florida. The National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Dade County support the project.

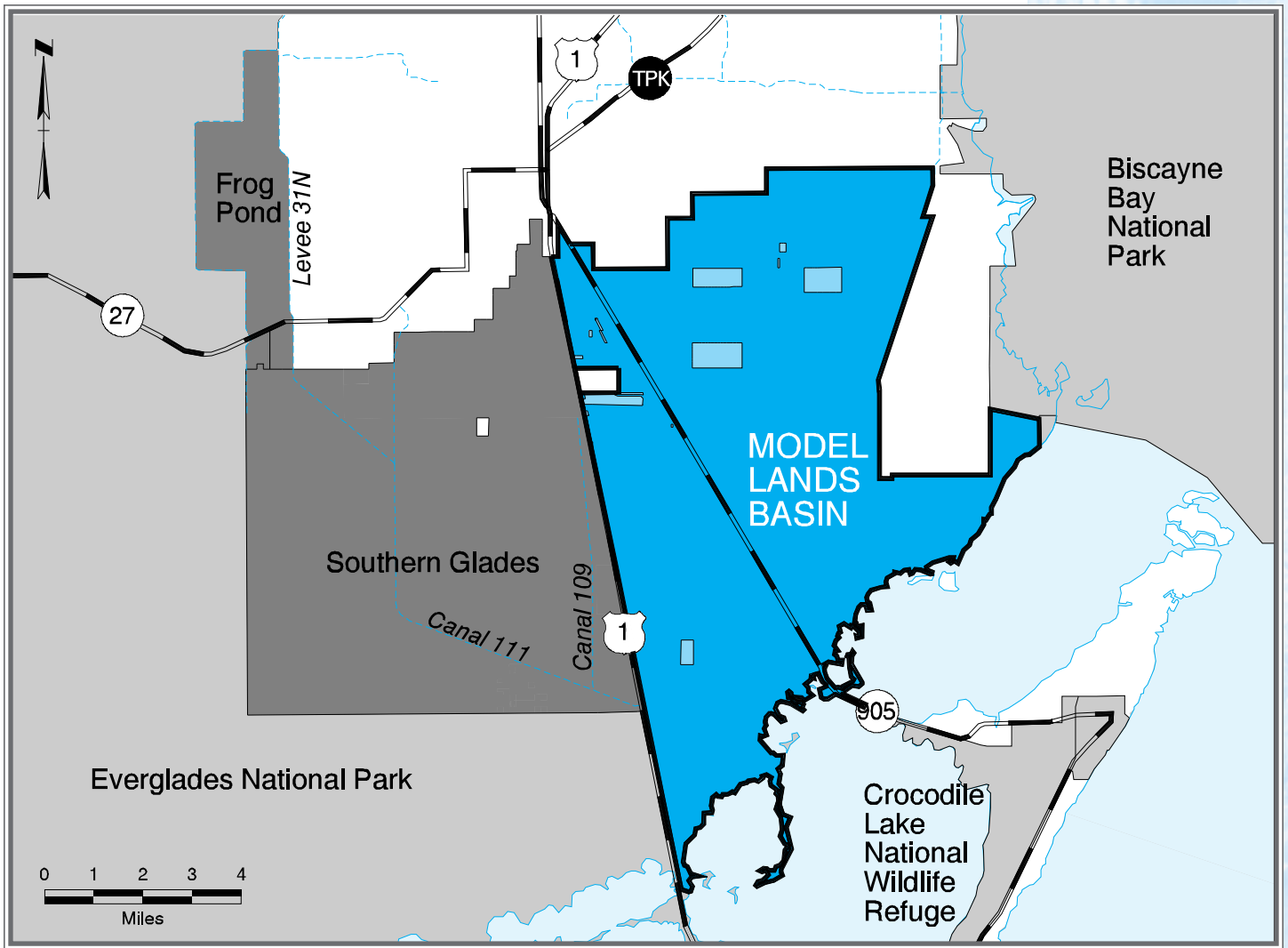
## **POTENTIAL FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE MANNER**

Exotic plant invasions in the northwest corner, and in the additional lands is severe. Dade County has indicated that this site would be a high priority area for treatment of exotics as part of its off-site mitigation program.

Dade County has a funding source for partial management, through the County's Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Trust Fund, which could include exotic plant treatment and hydrologic restoration.

## **RECREATION POTENTIAL**

This tract is surprisingly open and, for the dedicated hiker, would provide the opportunity to explore a rather unique part of Florida. There is excellent opportunity for use of the extensive shoreline, by boaters and fishermen..



Counties:

**Dade and Monroe**

Total Project Area:

**42,138 acres**

Total Project Acquired:

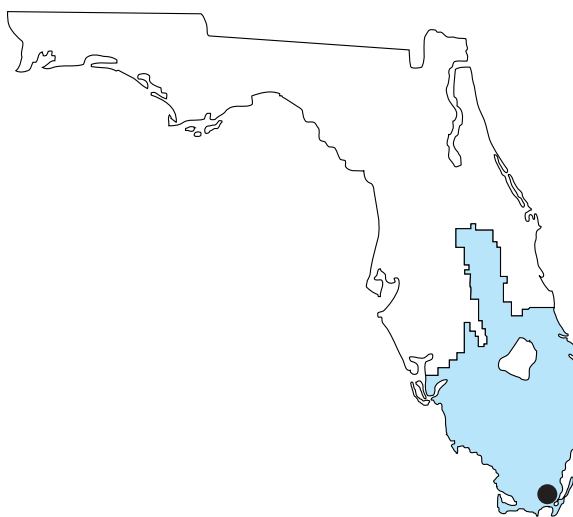
**1,270 acres**

Acres Remaining:

**40,868 acres**

Number of Owners:

**Numerous**



- SOR Lands Acquired to Date
- Potential Acquisition Areas
- Other Conservation Areas
- Other SOR Projects
- 1997 Project Additions
- SOR Project Boundary